



Advisory Councils to the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

2008-2009
Annual Reports
September 2009



This document was compiled by the
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Members

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Ms. Harneen Chernow, Jamaica Plain
Mr. Gerald Chertavian, Cambridge
Mr. Michael D'Ortenzio, Jr., Chair, Student Advisory Council, Wellesley
Dr. Thomas E. Fortmann, Lexington
Ms. Beverly Holmes, Springfield
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Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906
Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370
www.doe.mass.edu





Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906

Telephone: (781) 338-3000
TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

Dear Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education,

State law (G.L. Chapter 15, Section 1G) establishes a general framework for advisory councils to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. In 2008-2009 there were seventeen active advisory councils to the Board – Adult Basic Education, Arts Education, Community Service Learning, Educational Personnel, Educational Technology, English Language Learners/Bilingual Education, Gifted and Talented, Global Education, Interdisciplinary Health Education and Human Services, Life Management Skills, Mathematics and Science Education, Parent and Community Education and Involvement, Racial Imbalance, School and District Accountability and Assistance, Special Education, Technology/Engineering Education and Vocational Technical Education. In addition, the State Student Advisory Council, whose members are elected by other students rather than appointed by the Board, is an active and important advisory council to the Board.

The *Advisory Councils to the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Annual Reports for 2008-2009* is compiled by the Department and provided to apprise you of the 2008-2009 advisory council activities and recommendations. Each council report is submitted by the chair or co-chairs of the council for your information and consideration. If the Board is interested in greater detail on the activities and recommendations of any council as it relates to the goals and priorities of the Board and Department, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Introduction

State law (G.L. Chapter 15, Section 1G) establishes a general framework for advisory councils to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. In 2008-2009 there were seventeen active advisory councils to the Board – Adult Basic Education; Arts Education; Community Service Learning; Educational Personnel; Educational Technology; English Language Learners/Bilingual Education; Gifted and Talented; Global Education; Interdisciplinary Health Education and Human Services; Life Management Skills; Mathematics and Science Education; Parent and Community Education and Involvement; Racial Imbalance; School and District Accountability and Assistance, Special Education; Technology/Engineering Education and Vocational Technical Education. In addition, the State Student Advisory Council, whose members are elected by other students rather than appointed by the Board, is an active and important advisory council to the Board.

At the October 21, 2008 Board of Elementary and Secondary Education meeting, 113 new members were appointed and 14 members were reappointed to second three year term on the Board. On November 3, 2008 members of all 17 advisory councils were invited to an All Advisory Councils meeting with Board Chairwoman Maura Banta and Commissioner Mitchell Chester for orientation and the Charge to the Councils for the 2008-2009 year.

The Charge from the Commissioner was to use the collective talent and expertise of council members under the leadership of Department administrators and liaisons to make suggestions for closing the achievement gap and the expectation gap as well as relevant aspects of the following goals and priorities and two major initiatives.

State Board and Commissioner's Working Goals and Priorities, 2008-2010

The Board and senior staff held a retreat the summer of 2008 to focus our work over the course of the next couple of years. The following were established to guide our work.

- **Educator Development:** Work in partnership with key stakeholders to establish an effective educator workforce development system, including recruitment, preparation, licensure, license renewal, induction, mentoring, supervision, evaluation, and career enhancement.
- **Curriculum and Instruction:** Work in partnership with key stakeholders to build capacity of schools and districts to provide high quality curriculum and instruction for all students and prepare them for college and careers.
- **Accountability Redesign:** Work in partnership with stakeholders to develop the processes for district and school review and assistance that will produce an efficient, integrated, transparent, fair, and effective system for building the capacity of districts and schools to ensure high level teaching and learning.
- **Supports for Students and Families:** Work in partnership with stakeholders to provide students and families with access to the school- and community-based social, health, nutrition, and other supports they need to benefit from educational opportunity.
- **State Leadership and Operations:** Organize and build capacity within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to assist schools and districts.

Task Force on 21st Century Skills

Secretary Reville convened a Task Force on 21st Century Skills the Spring of 2008 under the leadership of Board member Gerald Chertavian to assist the Board in considering how to infuse 21st century learning into the work of the state's public schools. Specifically, the Task Force was asked to recommend how the Board might supplement its work on standards, assessments, accountability, curriculum, professional and teacher development to signal educators across the Commonwealth that 21st century skills should be infused into the curriculum.

After eight meetings between May and October, the Task Force settled on the following five broad levers for change:

- **Educator Training and Development:** Overhaul the state's teacher training and professional development programs to recruit and retain high achieving educators who have a background in and up-to-date knowledge of 21st century skills.
- **Standards:** Raise the state's bar on rigor by embedding 21st century skills and content through the Commonwealth's curriculum frameworks in every subject.
- **Assessment:** Become a national leader in assessment by integrating the measurement of 21st century skills throughout the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS).
- **Accountability:** Hold teachers, administrators and the state accountable for incorporating 21st century skills into the curriculum in a complementary way and hold students accountable for learning them.
- **Demonstration Vehicles:**
 - Establish up to five 21st Century Districts and up to ten 21st Century Schools
 - Expand the number of Expanded Learning Time Schools to 100 or more
 - Establish the "Creative Teaching Partners Initiative," and strive to place up to 1,000 artists, scientists and/or engineers-in-residence in schools part-time over the next five years.

Adult Basic Education Advisory Council

I. INTRODUCTION

The primary focus of the Adult Basic Education Advisory Council (ABE) was program performance. Specifically, the council reviewed performance data to develop an understanding of the outcomes of ABE programs. The ABE Advisory Council reviewed extensive data related to the attendance, persistence and outcomes of adult learners enrolled in Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) funded Community Adult Learning Centers.

Based on the data review, the council is working to develop recommendations that highlight effective program practices and that will also define a protocol for addressing underperforming programs.

II. 2008-2009 WORK OF THE COUNCIL

At the council's first meeting, the primary focus was a discussion of the perspectives of the various stakeholders (students, staff, ESE, businesses, etc.) in the ABE system and why performance data would be important to them. The council also reviewed data related to program performance and generated a list of questions.

In order to address the questions raised at the first meeting, council members reviewed the following data at the second meeting:

- Individual program performance information;
- Program performance - sorted by ABE only, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) only and ABE/ESOL; and
- Program performance - sorted by program size (number of students served, funding amount).

A preliminary analysis of the data revealed the following:

- ESOL only programs in general scored the highest percent in meeting the performance standards; 84 percent of the 25 ESOL only programs scored 42 or more points which indicate that they are in the "Meets" category;
- When combining the programs that offer either ABE or ESOL only, 69 percent of these 39 programs are in the "Meets" category with 42 or more points;
- Overall, 59 percent of the programs are in the "Meets" category;
- The percent of programs scoring 42 or more points ranged from 43 percent to 84 percent, but the number of programs was almost half in the ABE only category; and
- Programs that specialize in only ABE or ESOL focus on fewer assessment tools and fewer curriculum framework areas which may be a significant factor for these ABE only or ESOL only programs.

In light of Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) participation in a U.S. Department of Education sponsored technical assistance project to explore the possibility of implementing a performance-based funding system, the council saw a presentation about performance-based funding and discussed the pros and cons of using funding to improve performance.

The council also inquired about current policies related to underperformance and learned that underperformance is currently addressed through the program's submission of a continuous improvement plan that must provide an action plan that addresses the areas of underperformance relative to the average statewide performance reflected in the performance standards. Underperforming programs are referred to the System for Adult Basic Education Support for technical assistance.

III. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

Addressing the educational needs of parents with less than the skills expected of high school graduate and/or limited English language proficiency is essential to closing the achievement gap between the Commonwealth's poorer children and their more middle class counterparts. To that end, adult basic education programs enroll over 8,000 parents of children under 18. These programs help parents achieve goals to overcome poverty, access needed community services, obtain employment and embark on career pathways. In order to ensure that parents and all adult learners receive quality services, the advisory council d ACLS with drafting a policy recommendation on underperforming programs for review and discussion in FY10.

The advisory council recommended that ACLS consider the following when drafting the policy recommendation:

- Analysis of the performance data of student sub-populations (for example: education background, age, disability status);
- Develop a clear definition of "under-performance";
- Review the model that is used by ESE to monitor Charter Schools; and
- Consider challenges unique to the ABE system (for example: geographic distribution/isolation of programs).

IV. COUNCIL DETAILS

ESE Administrator: Bob Bickerton, Associate Commissioner

ESE Council Liaison: Anne Serino, Administrator, Adult Basic Education

Chairperson: John Schneider, Executive Vice President, MassINC.

Members of the 2008-2009 Advisory Council:

Linda Braun, Vice President, Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education

Ernest Best, Executive Director, Massachusetts Alliance for Adult Literacy

Robert Haynes, President, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

Elizabeth Hughes, Director, Quincy Community Action Adult Education Program

Andrea Kelly, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Higher Education

Andre Mayer, Senior Vice President, Associated Industries of Massachusetts

Mary Sarris, Executive Director, North Shore Workforce Investment Board

Kenny Tamarkin, Executive Director, Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education

Sally Waldron, Vice President, World Education

Council Meeting Dates: January 26, 2008; March 3, 2009: and June 11, 2009.

Arts Education Advisory Council

I. INTRODUCTION

The Arts Education Advisory Council (AEAC) advises the Commissioner and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on arts education in the Commonwealth. This includes examining statewide trends and needs, seeking public and professional input, identifying model programs, and making recommendations on policies and programs for the dance, music, theatre, visual arts, and media components of the Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework.

The FY09 AEAC members represented a wide range of experience and activities in arts education. They included school district arts directors and teachers, college professors of arts education, state and non-profit arts education administrators, and education staff from arts organizations. All arts disciplines were represented, as well as all educational levels.

II. WORK OF THE COUNCIL

The AEAC addressed three of the 2008-2010 priorities established by the Commissioner and the Board in 4 meetings following the Commissioner's November meeting at which the charge was given to all councils. Three subcommittees were formed. Each subcommittee chose one of the priorities and did in-depth research and several conference calls between meetings, then presented its findings conducted to the council. Members also contacted several arts educators in an effort to get a better understanding of the relevant issues, and hear about more educational practices in progress. Much discussion was generated at each meeting before the recommendations were formulated.

The following 2008-2010 priorities were chosen by AEAC for research, discussion, and recommendations:

- **Educator Development:** Work in partnership with key stakeholders to establish an effective educator workforce development system, including recruitment, preparation, licensure, license renewal, induction, mentoring, supervision, evaluation, and career enhancement.
- **Curriculum and Instruction:** Work in partnership with key stakeholders to build capacity of schools and districts to provide high quality curriculum and instruction for all students and prepare them for college and careers.
- **Accountability Redesign:** Work in partnership with stakeholders to develop the processes for district and school review and assistance that will produce an efficient, integrated, transparent, fair, and effective system for building the capacity of districts and schools to ensure high level teaching and learning.

In addition, the AEAC provided suggestions in a letter sent February 9, 2009 to the Commissioner regarding the recommendations of the Task Force on 21st Century Skills.

III. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

AEAC makes the following recommendations based on research, review of current best practices in educational institutions and arts organizations both in Massachusetts and in other states, and also input from the field.

Achievement Gap: To close the achievement gap and ensure development of 21st Century Skills in students throughout the Commonwealth AEAC recommends:

- Identification and replication of existing model Massachusetts arts education programs (dance, music, theatre, visual art, and media);
- Inclusion of knowledge of the arts in principal and classroom teacher licensure regulations;
- Creation of a regional system of mentoring and ongoing professional development for arts specialists;
- Identification of alignment of current Arts Curriculum Frameworks with 21st Century Skills;
- Integration of the arts throughout the curriculum to teach essential concepts in math, sciences, and social studies;
- Development and implementation of accountability systems to ensure access to arts education for all students and to assess arts learning; and
- Use of technology to facilitate model and curriculum dissemination and professional development.

Educator Development: To develop strategies to produce the most effective arts educators for students in the state of Massachusetts.

- **Administrator and Teacher Training:** Provide administrators and arts educators with discipline-specific training, professional development; and sustained encouragement to ensure successful entry and retention of arts specialists; and to strengthen student opportunities to learn in and through the arts.
 - Recommend that principal licensure should include a course addressing the qualifications of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts teachers to ensure appropriate hiring standards statewide;
 - Recommend that licensure testing of teacher candidates within the arts disciplines reflect a balance of strong content, pedagogy, and clinical/fieldwork experiences; and
 - Establish guidelines for district new-teacher mentoring systems that address existing limitations.
 - Provide two mentors for each arts specialist: an arts expert mentor for content/ pedagogy /professional development; and a mentor for school culture and policy.
 - Recruit retired arts educators to serve as content and pedagogy mentors on a regional basis.
- **Professional Development:** Establish a system of regional and statewide professional development for Initial and Professional licensed arts specialists and classroom teachers to support 21st Century teaching and learning in all four arts disciplines and arts-integrated curricula.

- Provide professional development for arts specialists on a regional and statewide basis in content, pedagogy, curriculum (re)design, arts integration, assessment, and 21st Century Skills;
- Reinstate and increase ESE funding for summer arts institutes (in all disciplines) across the state for educators with follow-up sessions that provide professional development addressing content, pedagogy, action research methods, and arts integration; and
- Use both in-person and online delivery systems.

Curriculum and Instruction: To design curriculum for Massachusetts public schools to meet the needs of all students in the 21st Century.

- Establish a task force in FY10 to identify the alignment of the current Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework (1999; revised 2007) with 21st Century Skills;
- Identify districts with model programs and identify arts curricula and programs in MA schools that successfully address 21st Century Skills in all arts disciplines.
 - Provide online access to the collection of curricula to educators; and
 - Include as an addendum to the Arts Framework.
 - Provide online print and video examples of:
 - lessons that incorporate global awareness;
 - active teaching and learning;
 - students' performances and products; and
 - performance-based assessment embedded into instruction strategies.
 - Work with Massachusetts Cultural Council and other professional organizations to define and demonstrate best practices, and roles of resident artists and cultural organizations in schools.
 - Arts Integration: Support integration of arts curriculum through the provision of resources-funding, collaborative time, planning time, teaching time, space, materials-focused on professional development for administrators, arts-integrated curriculum development, and professional development in arts-integrated pedagogy for classroom teachers and arts specialists. In addition, integrate the arts to:
 - Teach “essential concepts” in math, science, social studies;
 - Provide access to learning in all content areas;
 - Integrate global awareness/multiculturalism and local culture into the curriculum; and
 - Educate the whole child.

Accountability Redesign: To develop an accountability system for arts education.

- **Systems Development:**
 - Develop, implement, and support an accountability system that provides and supports access to arts education for all students; and
 - Develop, implement, and provide ongoing support for an accountability infrastructure in arts education that addresses differentiated assessment, local leadership, education, legal mandates, ongoing development, and comprehensive accountability.

- **Research-based Models:**
 - Identify and highlight, as well as provide ongoing support for existing model programs, curricula, and assessments that support an accountability infrastructure in arts education.
 - Research effective performance-based assessment systems (e.g., Worcester Public Schools, Washington State) and include in Arts Framework; and
 - Include examples and models from districts statewide of performance-based assessments designed to address 21st Century Skills in all arts disciplines.
- **District Report Cards for Arts Programs:**
 - Develop and implement a yearly district reporting and accountability system related to the status of arts education in the Commonwealth; and
 - Include reporting on the status of arts education in school improvement plans.

Board’s Task Force on 21st Century Skills Recommendations: The AEAC commends the Task Force for its work to offer comprehensive findings and recommendations. In particular, the AEAC agrees with the Task Force’s recognition of the critical role that the arts play in developing 21st Century Skills. Studies funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Harvard, and the National Arts Education Partnership, as well as programs here in Massachusetts, demonstrate that the arts build skills in critical thinking, collaboration, imagination, innovation, persistence, problem solving, and cultural awareness important skills to enable students to confront the challenges they will face in college and the 21st Century workforce.

The council supports the recommendation to place resident artists in classrooms across the state as an important step to deploy Massachusetts’ cultural resources to encourage creative learning in schools.

However, to ensure the successful development of 21st Century Skills in all students, the AEAC recommends that the ESE:

- Consider artist residencies to be a supplement to consistent, sequential arts instruction (dance, music, theatre/drama, visual arts, and media) provided by highly qualified arts educators as defined by NCLB. Residencies should be developed and monitored by the arts educators;
- Assist school districts in leading, maintaining, strengthening, and restoring, where necessary, K-12 arts education as core curriculum per the Education Reform Act of 1993 and the Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Frameworks, with adequate time in school for sequential, in-depth, arts classes at least twice per week throughout the school year and preparation and hiring of certified arts specialists in sufficient numbers to ensure that students are taught by highly qualified educators at an effective teacher-student ratio; and
- Proceed with the revision of the Arts Curriculum Framework to identify the connections of arts learning and 21st Century Skill development.

IV. COUNCIL DETAILS

ESE Administrator: Susan Wheltle, Director of the Office of the Humanities, History, Social Science

ESE Council Liaison: Lurline Muñoz-Bennett, Ph.D., Arts Education and Equity Coordinator

Co-Chairpersons: Diane Daily, Education Programs Manager, Massachusetts Cultural Council
R. Barry Shauck, Head Art Education-Boston University; President, National Art Education Association

Members of the 2008 – 2009 Advisory Council:

Maureen G. Caouette, Director of Art, Music, New Media, Littleton Middle School

Beth Delforge, Arts Curriculum Director K-12, Marblehead Public Schools

Lindsay Erben, Art & Nature Program Specialist, Peabody Essex Museum

Kathy Ivanowski, Visual Arts Liaison, Worcester Public School

Lisa Leach, Performing Arts Liaison, Worcester Public Schools

Barbara Marder, Teacher, Somerville Public Schools

Sandra Nicolucci, Associate Professor of Music, Boston University

Luci Prawdzik, Supervisor of Art K-12, Somerville Public Schools

Jonathan Rappaport, Arts Administrator and Professor, New England Conservatory

Benedict J. Smar, Senior Lecturer, Department of Music & Dance, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Rosanne E. Trolan, Special Education Art Teacher, Cotting School, Lexington Public Schools

Jessica B. Wilke, Music Teacher, F.G. Houghton Elementary School, Sterling Public Schools

Council Meeting Dates: November 14, 2008; February 13, 2009; March 13, 2009; April 9, 2009; and May 15, 2009.

Community Service-Learning Advisory Council

I. INTRODUCTION

The Community Service-Learning Advisory Council (CSL) includes representatives from K-16 and from the community. This membership results in an outlook that seeks to strengthen service-learning in all sectors (K-12, higher education and community-based organizations). The CSL Advisory Council met four times in 2008-2009 and worked primarily to identify connections between service-learning and the Board's and Commissioner's Working Goals and Priorities, the Task Force on 21st Century Skills, and the Governor's Readiness Report.

Subgroups of the CSL Advisory Council worked on developing reports highlighting how service-learning can advance each of the Working Goals and Priorities laid out in the Commissioner's Charge to the councils in November 2008, as well as 21st Century Skills and the goals of the Readiness Project. The first report is in draft form, and is on service-learning and improving curriculum and instruction. The paper highlights the benefits of CSL as pedagogy and provides examples of its use. The CSL Advisory Council also gathered various resources that highlight service-learning as a tool for developing 21st Century Skills. A draft report with examples was created. In general, the CSL Advisory Council continues to recommend the use of service-learning as a teaching pedagogy in all curricular areas covered by the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The CSL Advisory Council strongly supports service-learning modules that detail the development, implementation, and assessment of service-learning. Such models are being documented and will soon be disseminated to teachers throughout Massachusetts.

II. 2008-2009 WORK OF THE COUNCIL

At both the state and national levels, this is an exciting time for the service-learning field. The CSL Advisory Council spent much of its meeting time this year discussing strategies for taking advantage of recent initiatives to advance service-learning, civic engagement, and education in general. The CSL Advisory Council's representative membership allows for the sharing of ideas from various sectors about successful strategies for implementing and advancing CSL. For example, in higher education, the increasing use of CSL on campuses to engage students in both their communities and their studies can serve as both an example and an opportunity for partnership with K-12 schools. Massachusetts, with its strong college and university network and foundation for CSL in all sectors, can assume a leadership role in integrating CSL connections K-16.

With the passage of the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, new resources and opportunities to support the expansion of CSL in all sectors are likely to be available. The CSL Advisory Council encourages the Department (ESE) to take advantage of this momentum to continue to be a leader in the service-learning field.

As described above, the CSL Advisory Council worked this year to identify and provide guidance for advancing CSL pedagogy as a strategy to achieve the goals of the Board and Department, the Readiness Project, the 21st Century Skills Task Force, and the newly enacted

Serve America Act. Meeting discussions and subgroup work revolved around identifying examples of successful service-learning practice and its benefits and impact on these initiatives.

The CSL Advisory Council's White Paper, published in 2006 (http://www.doe.mass.edu/sccivicismission_report.pdf), continues to provide relevant information for administrators, teachers, and policy makers in Massachusetts in regards to the alignment with the Board's and Commissioner's Working Goals and Priorities, the Task Force on 21st Century Skills and the Governor's Final Readiness Report recommendations is urged.

In addition, the CSL Advisory Council collaborated with the Global Education Advisory Council in supporting the GEAC position paper. The CSL Advisory Council chair also attended the May GEAC meeting and advocated for the inclusion of global service-learning as part of the Global Education Advisory Council plan.

Using distance technology, the CSL Advisory Council has continued to be able to conduct meetings where members do not have to travel long distances to be present. The council would like to thank the ESE, CSL Advisory Council Liaison, Kristen McKinnon, for initiating the technology plan that allows all areas of Massachusetts to be represented in meetings.

III. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

Service-learning as a teaching and learning methodology engages students in learning, and research studies have confirmed that service-learning engages students in school and reduces the likelihood of dropping out. Service-learning practices should be disseminated to teachers throughout the Commonwealth, as this form of experiential learning involves students' active participation, voice, and choice in applying their learning through community service, working with community partners and reflecting on their experience. Through a contextual learning website that fits well with the technology literacy of 21st Century learning, quality service-learning projects are currently being documented, edited, and disseminated both online as well as in paper copies that will be sent to schools across Massachusetts. Replication of well-developed, quality service-learning will be available to many teachers and thus many students who may not have knowledge of the power of service-learning for academic and civic success. This is a first and important step, but it is only a beginning.

Service-learning as a teaching and learning methodology needs to be encouraged in all disciplines that are represented in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Concrete service-learning examples could be included as suggested practice through the Frameworks and/or through companion documents.

The council recommends that the Department convene a K-16 focus group of leaders in service-learning and representing ESE, the CSL Advisory Council, higher education, community partners, community organizations, students, and government officials to develop a plan for service-learning in Massachusetts in light of the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act and Massachusetts' position as a leading state in service-learning.

IV. COUNCIL DETAILS

ESE Administrator: Rachelle Engler Bennett, Director of Student Support

ESE Council Liaison: Kristen McKinnon, CSL Specialist

Chairperson: Mary H. McCarthy, Principal, Cora Hubert Kindergarten, Hudson Public Schools

Members of the 2008-2009 Advisory Council:

Beverley Bell, Ed.D., Director, Teacher Education Program, College of the Holy Cross

Rich Cairn, Director, Teaching American History, Hampshire Educational Collaborative

Loxi Jo Calmes, Superintendent, Lunenburg Public Schools

Barbara Canyes, Executive Director, Massachusetts Campus Compact

Georgia Clancy, CSL Coordinator, Whitman-Hanson Public Schools

Anne French, CSL Director, North Adams Public Schools

Jim Gibbons, Realty Vision

Kimberley Grady, Community Placement Coordinator, Pittsfield Public Schools

Donna Harlan, Ed.D., Superintendent, Central Berkshire Regional School District

Doreen Martel, Community Member, Franklin

Beth McGuinness, Director of Programs, Massachusetts Service Alliance

Heather Putnam-Boulger, Executive Director, Berkshire County Regional Employment Board

John Saltmarsh, Director, New England Resource Center for Higher Education, University of Massachusetts Boston

Paul Sutherland, Consultant for Educational and Non Profit Organizations

Felisa Tibbitts, Executive Director, Human Rights Education Associates

Alexander Wheaton, Student, Clemens College

Terry Yoffie, Parent and Community Member, Newton

Council Meeting Dates: September 18, 2008; November 3, 2008; February 5, 2009: and May 20, 2009

Educational Personnel Advisory Council

I. INTRODUCTION

The Educational Personnel Advisory Council (EPAC) advises the Commissioner and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on issues pertaining to all educational personnel. This year, the council focused on issues pertaining to educator effectiveness, transparency and accountability, and the educator pipeline. Specifically in the areas of recruitment and retention, diversity, licensure, induction and mentoring, preparation program approval and resources for educators. The council met six times during the 2008-2009 school year.

II. 2008-2009 WORK OF THE COUNCIL

The council's three priorities – educator effectiveness, licensure, and recruitment were the focus of our 2008-2009 meetings, with major emphases on pipeline issues, license waivers, data related to educational personnel, administrator preparation initiatives, and closing the achievement gap. The council is looking forward to working with the Department in developing a plan that will focus on the importance of a highly qualified, culturally proficient and diverse, effective, educator workforce.

Efforts toward the development of this plan resulted in the following work by the council:

- The need for licensure waivers was reviewed and data charts were distributed identifying key licensure field shortages. The charts reflected total waivers by district, field, grade level, and type. They identified fields that have been in short supply for several years. Over the last two school years, the total number of Moderate Disabilities and Severe Disabilities waivers was greater than the combined total of the eight next highest waiver fields. The council discussed why these waivers were currently needed and how the need for these waivers might be reduced in the future. One of the major points of discussion was the educator pipeline for many of the hardship areas including Math, Science and Special Education;
- An overview of the objectives within the Department's Priority Action Plan was presented to the council, specifically those related to educator development. The Department hoped to implement these objectives by June 30, 2009. The council discussed each objective and provided feedback and input on each, which was taken into consideration by the Department;
- The current Administrator Standards for licensure are thought to have gaps and are not "teachable, actionable, or measureable." Therefore, four newly developed standards were presented with each one having several indicators for the Initial Principal/Assistant Principal license. Two public school districts (Boston and Springfield) are piloting these standards and indicators to assist in the development of a performance assessment for licensure. The Wallace Foundation has provided funding for this effort of building a cohesive leadership system and supporting school leaders throughout their career continuum. Much of the work was based on ISLIC standards. These four standards would serve as the basis for all administrator licenses. Council members recommended some changes to the description of the four standards and to the key indicators. The council has reviewed and discussed these standards and the changes twice in the last two years. The

larger plan is to develop indicators for all administrator licenses at both the Initial and Professional level and to develop mastery indicators. Further discussion will take place at the Department regarding how this would be introduced over time;

- The council continued to recommend that the Commissioner convene a diversity summit. It was suggested that the Governor, Secretary, and Commissioner attend the Diversity Summit in order to shine a spotlight on this issue. There was discussion regarding if the summit were to occur what the next step would be, and that perhaps just having the summit would be significant. Several ideas were discussed regarding particular issues that should be addressed within the summit. It was suggested that the summit could be convened and supported in partnership with others. There was agreement that a diverse and culturally proficient workforce is good for everyone. The council sent a letter to the Commissioner asking to convene the Diversity Summit and to address the council in the forthcoming school year;
- The council discussed the possibility of having a comparability study of MTEL and Praxis. The work done by the MTEL Pass Rate Study Group was referenced regarding alternative ways to demonstrate that licensure standards have been met. Included in this work was consideration of accepting the Praxis 1 (Reading and Writing) scores for out-of-state licensure candidates who have completed approved teacher education programs in a state who has signed the NASDTEC agreement. The Department has funding to put out a RFR to do the comparability study. The Department is exploring areas of the 2010 NASDTEC agreement that may facilitate entry into Massachusetts for educators prepared out-of state;
- Vocational licensure was introduced to the council. The Department considered making amendments to vocational licensure regulations that would create a new vocational license titled Construction Crafts, allow the Initial license to be extended for a five year period, make vocational licensure validity periods the same as academic, and align vocational licensure regulations with academic recertification regulations by adding provisions for inactive and invalid licenses. There was general agreement with suggested amendments;
- A systems change approach to educator preparation, licensure and professional development was discussed as a means to propose a licensure system that simplifies the process and ensures high standards of professional practice. The proposal would be implemented by establishing a parallel set of licensure regulations that would be used to pilot district and higher education preparation partnerships. This system change would look to alter the process from point of entry all the way to and through professional development. A case for this change was made which included factors such as educator preparation limitations, new teachers receiving only limited support, completing a second approved program often being too disconnected from on the job realities, pursuing a master's degree being burdensome, focusing on inputs versus outputs and outcomes, the Preliminary license assuring only content knowledge, and there are no benchmarks to be met during the 5 years of employment allowed under the Preliminary license. Further development of the system is planned;
- The council reviewed how the Department is looking at assessment information that can be used to develop a growth model. This growth model would look at how each individual student is doing from year to year not just to see if a student has reached a certain point. It would also look at students who were already at a good level and make sure that they are still growing and learning. This could be a new way to determine if schools are making strides in moving all students ahead. The Department has funding

available to begin the reengineering of SIMS in order to support the linking of students to classes, thereby completing the ability to connect educators with the performance of students under their . The council also heard a report on ARRA funding opportunities, and expressed its support for including a strong and strategic approach to educational human resource development in competitive grant opportunities that may arise as a result of Race to the Top funding; and

- At its final meeting, newly-appointed Associate Commissioner David Haselkorn reviewed the previous year's efforts with the council and requested an assessment by EPAC members of the key accomplishments of the previous year. There was considerable candor in the response of the group, which indicated that while a range of important issues were discussed and some key recommendations were made, it was difficult to point to specific changes as a result of the council's input. Members expressed a strong desire to develop an agenda that was more strategic, actionable, and measurable. There was considerable concern that the Board's limitation of four meetings a year was an impediment to drilling down on key issues in a way that would lead to measurable results. The Associate Commissioner suggested a possible way to frame EPAC's guidance more strategically, by taking a more comprehensive look at the status of the educator workforce in Massachusetts. This could result in a comprehensive report of key indicators with respect to teacher demographics, supply and demand, effectiveness, and equitable distribution of the educator workforce, as well as the opportunity to constellate recommendations within a coherent policy framework, grounded in the best available data. Council members were enthusiastic about the approach, while indicating the desire not to let this ambitious undertaking pre-empt the council's ability to offer guidance on discrete issues that may have more immediate timeframes.

III. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

We forwarded our recommendations on the development of a diversity summit to the Commissioner. The council is also strongly committed to developing strategies that address educator pipeline. In addition, the council will be seeking to work in assessing and implementing the recommendations of the Governor's readiness report. We hope that the Department will continue to use the Educational Personnel Advisory Council as a resource for vetting critical educational personnel issues. We look forward to this continuing partnership and assisting the Department and Board in achieving their goals and objectives, including concerted work on the above-referenced status of the teaching report. We believe that the Department will derive continued benefit from the perspectives of educational organizations and personnel, as represented on the council, who are directly affected by the educational and personnel policy decisions of the Department. We look forward to working in the coming year to help the Board and Department address its key strategic priorities.

IV. COUNCIL DETAILS

ESE Administrator: Bob Bickerton, Associate Commissioner (September-March), David Haselkorn, Associate Commissioner (March-Present)

ESE Council Liaison: George Sheehan, Supervisor Licensure Office

Chairperson: Fred Fuentes, Educational Consultant

Members of the 2008-2009 Advisory Council:

Sarah Birkeland, Senior Research Associate, Education Matters
MaryAnn Byrnes, Past President, MA Council for Exceptional Children
Lynda Coffill, Principal Coach, MA Elementary Schools Principals' Association
Frances Cooper-Berry, Staff Developer, Cambridge Public Schools
Sarah Daniels, Director of Licensure and Educator Quality, Boston Public Schools
Linda Davis-Delano, Board Member, Massachusetts Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
Stacey DeBoise Luster, Esq., Human Resource Manager, Worcester Public Schools
Barbara Garvey, Teacher, Brockton Public Schools
Magdalene Giffune, Superintendent-Retired
Elizabeth Gushov, Teacher, Wilmington Public Schools
Denise Hammon, Vice-President, Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, Massachusetts
Linda Hayes, Assistant Director, Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association
Marcia Horne, President, Commonwealth Teacher Education Consortium
Eileen Lee, Director for Improving Teacher Quality, MA Department of Higher Education
Donald McCallion, Executive Director, Massachusetts Association of School Personnel Administrators
MaryAnne McKinnon, Past-President, Massachusetts Association of colleges for Teacher Education
Peter Mili, Teacher, Cambridge Public Schools
Phyllis Renton Walt, Professor - Early Childhood, MA Bay Community College
Ray Shurtleff, Educational Consultant
Nora Todd, Professional Development Specialist, Massachusetts Teacher Association
Philip Veysey, Director of Educational Policy and Programs, American Federation of Teachers

Council Meeting Dates: September 17, 2008; October 8, 2008; November 5, 2008; January 21, 2009; March 4, 2009; and May 6, 2009.

Educational Technology Advisory Council

I. INTRODUCTION

Now in its eighth year as an advisory council, the Educational Technology Advisory Council (ETAC) is involved in a number of initiatives designed to integrate technology into teaching and learning and the use of technology resources to enhance educational decision-making in support of high student achievement. With a broad representation from K-12 schools, higher education, business and professional associations, the members of our advisory council explore innovative practices, recommend policy guidelines, and research emerging issues in the use of technology in our schools.

II. 2008-2009 WORK OF THE COUNCIL

The Educational Technology Advisory Council focused on four major initiatives in 2008-2009 including:

- Revision of the Technology Skills Assessment Tool (TSAT) for Teachers;
- Update of the School Technology and Readiness (STaR) chart;
- Development of a position paper on “Technology Leadership”; and
- Development of Guidelines for Internet Safety and Web 2.0.

Each initiative is linked to the Board’s and Commissioner’s Working Goals and Priorities, the Task Force on 21st Century Skills and closing the achievement gap. ETAC continues to support the importance of technology integration in teacher and administrator preparation and fully endorses the implementation of the new standards on “Instructional Technology.” The Department collaborated with other organizations and support initiatives including pilot projects in online testing, one-to-one computing, the data warehouse project, MassONE and works to evaluate and research new uses of technology that will lead to improved teaching and learning.

Task Forces were organized to address each of these issues. The ETAC Task Forces accomplished the following (Connection to Board Goals):

- The TSAT was updated to reflect the Board’s approved “Massachusetts Technology Literacy Standards and Expectations,” April 2008. TSAT continues to serve as a useful tool to inform professional development for teachers and provides an effective way in which schools can report the level of teacher proficiency in the use of technology in our schools. (21st Century Skills, Educator Development, Curriculum and Instruction, Accountability);
- A website was developed (<http://etac.tecedge.net>) in order to gather feedback on the update of the STaR Chart. The site is highly interactive and the suggestions submitted will assist ETAC in the revision of the STaR Chart. The site will also provide links to other pertinent information on technology integration. (21st Century Skills, Educator Development, Curriculum and Instruction, Accountability and Closing the Achievement Gap);
- The question: “Who are the ‘Technology Leaders’ in our schools and what should they be doing?” is the premise of the position paper on “Technology Leadership.” From students to teachers and school committees to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary

Education, everyone plays a vital role in technology leadership. The framework of the position paper will include the vision, innovation, planning and budgeting, teambuilding and staffing, professional development, ethics, safety and equity necessary to achieve technology leadership in our schools. A draft of the paper will be prepared for the fall of 2009. (Educator Development, Curriculum and Instruction, Supports for Students and Families, State Leadership and Operation and 21st Century Skills); and

- ETAC's Internet Safety Task Force was formed to advise the Department and districts with regard to cyber-security, cyber-safety and cyber-ethics (C3) issues. A presentation summarizing recent research into what school age children know and don't know about C3 topics and this presentation will be posted on ETAC's website. ETAC believes it is necessary to understand the landscape that children face online and to provide educators, families and students with the strategies for safe and responsible use of the Internet. (21st Century Skills, Curriculum and Instruction, Supports for Students and Families)

ETAC continues to support the following issues:

- Pilot of online testing (MCAS);
- Review of the framework for the State Technology Plan;
- Pilot of online courses (MassONE) and other distance learning programs;
- Development and use of electronic portfolios;
- Partnerships with other technology initiatives; and
- Scale up of the Data Warehouse Project.

III. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Educational Technology Advisory Council recommends:

- The level of "proficient" or above on the Technology Self-Assessment Tool (TSAT) as the federal reporting standards for teacher technology literacy proficiency in Massachusetts; and
- The TSAT be revised to reflect the new PreK-12 Technology Literacy Standards for students and a broad understanding of Web 2.0 tools including cyber safety, security and ethics.

IV. COUNCIL DETAILS

ESE Administrator: Bob Bickerton, Senior Associate Commissioner

ESE Council Liaison: Connie Louie, Instructional Technology Director

Chairperson: David Troughton, Superintendent, North Reading Public Schools

Members of the 2008-2009 Advisory Council:

Donna Boivin, CIO, Springfield Public Schools

Nora Bourgoyn, Retired Executive Vice President, Fidelity Investments

Ellen Driscoll, Technology Director, Plymouth Public Schools

Cheryl Forster-Cahill, Principal, Ipswich Middle School

Steven Hiersche, Superintendent, Watertown Public Schools

Heather Johnson, VP Membership & Workforce, Massachusetts Technical Leadership Council

Stephen Kelley, Managing Partner, TECedge, LLC

Michael Lazzari, Student Representative, Revere High School

Brenda Matthis, Associate Professor, Lesley University

Lee McCanne, Director Technology & School Library, Weston Public Schools
Kimberly Rice, CIO, Boston Public Schools
Annamaria Schrimpf, President, MassCUE
Anne Sheehy, Instructional Technology Specialist, Lowell Public Schools
Thomas Stella, Assistant Superintendent, Everett Public Schools
Jean Tower, Director of Technology, Northborough-Southborough Public Schools
Arthur Travis, Computer Science Instructor, Springfield Technical Community College
Maxim Weinstein, Manager, StopBadware.org, Berkman Center for Internet Safety & Society,
Harvard University
David Whittier, Assistant Professor, School of Education, Boston University

Council Meeting Dates: September 22, 2008; November 3, 2008; January 26, 2009 (conference call); March 23, 2009; May 18, 2009; and June 22, 2009.

English Language Learners/Bilingual Education

I. INTRODUCTION

The English Language Learner Bilingual Education Advisory Council (ELL/BEAC) is composed of K-12 teachers, administrators, students, representatives from teacher preparation programs at institutes of higher education, and parents. The council is dedicated to improving educational opportunities for English Language Learners (ELLs) throughout Massachusetts. The ELL/BEAC Council has worked collaboratively in accordance with the Department's Charge to "assess statewide trends and needs; seek public and professional input; analyze information regarding education of English Language Learners; advise and make recommendations regarding legislation, regulations, and program guidelines, and provide other programmatic recommendations as it deems necessary to fulfill the goals established by the Board of Education" (ESE, 2007). During 2008-2009, based on the identified needs of MA educators as reported by council members and as requested by Administrator Kathy Riley, the council worked in subgroups to analyze existing information, guidelines, and best practice for ELLs in three major areas: ELL professional development (PD) for teachers, family and community communication and involvement, and placement and services for ELLs in special education. Each subgroup presented draft documents of its work in each of the three identified areas at the Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages (MATSOL) Conference on May 8, 2009. Approximately 60 Massachusetts educators attended this workshop to provide feedback and share concerns based on their knowledge of policy and practice within their districts. The council is aware that ELLs are not making progress in Massachusetts as indicated by AYP statistics, high dropout rates, and increased placement in special education. In this report the council respectfully makes recommendations with regard to current research and policy implementation. Council representatives will request a meeting to explain these recommendations and supportive research in greater detail.

II. 2008-2009 WORK OF THE COUNCIL

The council met both as a larger group and in council subgroups focused on the areas of ELL professional development, family and community communication and involvement and appropriate placement and services for ELLs in special education. In September the council reaffirmed its commitment to creating a document which would serve as a resource to the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, teachers and administrators working with ELLs in school districts and higher education.

As council subgroups worked on gathering research and making recommendations focused on the aforementioned topics, their work was guided by the Commissioner's Charge where three reports were carefully considered: *The Board's and Commissioner's Working Goals and Priorities*, *The Board's Task Force on 21st Century Skills* and *The Governor's Final Readiness Report*. On the council's behalf, members of the council provided testimony at the June 23 Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BOE) meeting, which included an overview of the council's findings and recommendations.

III. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

In alignment with State Board and Commissioner's Working Goals and Priorities, 2008-2010, The Task Force on 21st Century Skills, and The Governor's Readiness Project, the ELL/BEAC makes three primary recommendations:

- Reduce the Achievement and Expectation gaps;
- Improve 21st Century Skills for all students; and
- Effectively utilize educational funding.

These recommendations are consistent with the Working Group on ELL Policy (August, Hakuta, O'Day, 2009).

Reducing the Achievement Gap - Council Recommendations Aligned with State Board's and Commissioner's Working Goals and Priorities and Governor's Report

The achievement gap can be linked to myriad socioeconomic factors and the quality of education provided to ELLs. We limit our recommendations to the quality of education factors, including the quality of instructional programs and the quality of teachers.

Working Goal and Priority - Educator Development:

- Work in partnership with key stakeholders to establish an effective educator workforce development system, including recruitment, preparation, licensure, license renewal, induction, mentoring, supervision, evaluation, and career enhancement.

Governor's Report, Readiness Goal:

- To transform public education in the Commonwealth, we must ensure that every student is taught by highly competent, well-educated, strongly supported and effective educators.

Council Recommendations: A comprehensive plan that includes long- and short-term goals is necessary to address the need to increase the number of highly competent, well-educated and effective educators who are appropriately prepared to teach ELLs (English as a Second Language, Sheltered English Instruction and bilingual teachers) and to build capacity in this area. To achieve this, the council makes the following recommendations:

- **Recruitment:** The Commissioner and Board are encouraged to require pre-service teachers to be prepared to teach ELLs. This will require faculty development for institutions of higher education (IHE) faculty, which is in alignment with mandates of Title II.
- **Licensure:** The council recommends: the reinstatement of bilingual educator licensure for two-way/dual language programs with the requirement that teachers complete a comprehensive bilingual teaching program and demonstrate proficiency in both language and competency in the content areas they teach, as well as second language pedagogy and culture. Pursuant to M.G.L. 71A, two-way bilingual programs are a viable and legal option for educating ELLs in MA. (Over 2,000 students are currently being taught in bilingual education programs.) A teacher who simply speaks the language of students is not necessarily prepared to teach ELLs effectively.
 - The council further recommends that ESL licensure must be aligned with teachers of English for Students with Other Languages (TESOL) standards, which incorporate

- National Board Standards, and are consistent with World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) standards that are embraced by 19 states.
 - The council recommends the establishment of a bilingual/ELL special educator license or endorsement.
- **License Renewal:** The council recommends the BESE change the status of the four categories of Structured English Immersion (SEI) preparation from guidance to regulation across all licensure groups. The content of these categories needs to be updated to reflect evidence-based outcomes. The council offers to provide guidance in this area.
- **Induction, Mentoring, Supervision, and Evaluation:** The council recommends training and retooling for administrators in the areas of culture and language. This will enable administrators to create effective induction and mentoring programs for teachers and implement effective evaluation of programs and instruction. It will also enable administrators to effectively outreach to families (see further recommendations under supports for students and families).

Working Goal and Priority- Curriculum and Instruction: Work in partnership with key stakeholders to build capacity of schools and districts to provide high quality curriculum and instruction for all students and prepare them for college and careers.

Governor's Readiness

- **Report Goals:** To transform public education in the Commonwealth, we must meet the learning needs of each student and provide the understanding, encouragement, support, knowledge and skills each requires to exceed the state's high expectations and rigorous academic standards; and to transform public education in the Commonwealth, we must prepare every student for postsecondary education, career and lifelong economic, social and civic success.

Council Recommendations: The council recommends a review of the current regulations for the implementation of M.G.L. Chapter 71A. Under the current regulations many ELLs do not have full accessibility to the MA Curriculum Frameworks because instruction is only provided in English, a language they are in the process of learning. ELLs must learn English as a new language, which is a developmental process that occurs over time; at the same time ELLs must also learn the academic content in most cases through English, a language in which they are not yet proficient. Current SEI implementation was originally designed for ELLs with intermediate or greater proficiency and for ELLs with grade level academic skills in their native language. Two-Way Bilingual Education is a viable option under current Chapter 71A law. To begin to reduce the achievement gap, the council makes the following recommendations:

- **Clear Descriptions of Language Program Types:** The council recommends that titles for alternative language program types (for example, SEI, ESL only, Native Language plus ESL) are used consistently throughout the state to accurately describe the language of instruction, and program format. Each Language Program Type should provide ELLs with research-based instruction leading to comprehensible and accessible outcomes in academic content (which is mediated by language) and English Language development as indicated by the levels of English language proficiency continuum.
- **Adequate Language Services:** The council recommends that a plan of action be developed and put in place to address the learning needs of ELLs who are underserved or not served at all throughout the state (see Report to the Legislature: English language Acquisition Professional Development, May 2009 at

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/reports/0509elapd.doc>). The council also recommends that the OPTOUT classification be clarified or eliminated so that all involved constituents (teachers, administrators, parents and students) understand that districts have a responsibility to provide equitable services to all English Language Learners. (Please see the Gastón Report (2009) at <http://www.gaston.umb.edu>, and the American School orientation noted in this report.)

- **Learning Rate and Language Program Type:** The council recommends that the Board require ESE to provide achievement data which are disaggregated by Language Program type, duration, and student characteristics, including language group and level of native language achievement.
- **Literacy Learning:** Pre-literate ELLs need to have appropriate language programs where instruction in literacy and language development is provided. Research-based literacy instruction for students at all levels of development which focuses on all four language domains is essential for all English Language Learners.
- **Teacher Quality:** The council recommends that quality of instruction be monitored in terms of teacher credentials for the language and the content they are teaching. Without teachers who are both highly qualified and well-prepared to teach ELLs, a reduction in the achievement and expectations gaps will not be possible.
- **Response to Intervention (RTI):** The council recommends that a plan and appropriate guidelines for implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) (*IDEA, 2004*) be appropriately implemented, thus ensuring the likelihood of appropriate services and program placement.
- Establish culturally and linguistically appropriate guidelines for special education assessment, eligibility, and implementation of IEPs (Escamilla, 2009).

Working Goal and Priority-Accountability Redesign: Work in partnership with stakeholders to develop the processes for district and school review and assistance that will produce an efficient, integrated, transparent, fair, and effective system for building the capacity of districts and schools to ensure high level teaching and learning.

Governor's Readiness Report Goals: To transform public education in the Commonwealth, we must unleash innovation and systemic change throughout the Commonwealth's schools, school districts, colleges and universities as well as in the partnerships and collaborations among education institutions, communities, businesses and nonprofits.

Council Recommendations: High level teaching/learning is correlated with appropriate assessment of both academic language in English and achievement of academic content at various levels: classroom, school, district, and state. The appropriate use of quality assessment data is critical to reducing the achievement gap. The council makes the following recommendations:

- **Capacity Building:** The council recommends that:
 - ARRA funds be used to establish data systems that disaggregate information by Language Program Type, duration in program, and demographics of ELLs, including language group, proficiency levels in English, and level of achievement in first language, thus connecting instruction and assessment, and providing valuable evidence on the effectiveness of each Language Program type; and

- Implement more *Train the Trainer* evidenced-based programs provided by IHEs for graduate credit.
- **Program Reviews:** The council recommends that the Board:
 - Ensure that coordinated program reviews are conducted by professionals who possess knowledge of and have had experience in working with ELLs.; and
 - Ensure state audit/oversight of teacher licensure depending on Language Program Type.

Working Goal and Priority - Supports for Students and Families: Work in partnership with stakeholders to provide students and families with access to the school- and community-based social, health, nutrition, and other supports they need to benefit from educational opportunity.

Council Recommendations: Research suggests a clear connection between family involvement and academic achievement (citations). The council recommends:

- **Parent Advisory Councils:** Reestablish ELL parent advisory councils, which will increase the involvement of families from a variety of cultures, who speak English as a second language.
- **American Schooling Orientation:** Culturally and linguistically responsive orientation to the American educational system would be provided to parents through the Parent Advisory Councils.
- **Communicative Accessibility:** Documents and meetings must be provided in a language parents and families understand
- **Professional Development for Teachers and Administrators:** Families differ across cultures. Educators who understand the strengths and needs of families from different cultures will be more able to work in partnership with these families.

Working Goal and Priority-State Leadership and Operations: Organize and build capacity within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to assist schools and districts.

Governor’s Readiness Report Goals: To transform public education in the Commonwealth, we must unleash innovation and systemic change throughout the Commonwealth’s schools, school districts, colleges and universities, as well as in the partnerships and collaborations among education institutions, communities, businesses and nonprofits.

Council Recommendations: To build capacity and institute a comprehensive plan for licensure that includes alignment with national standards and the professional skills necessary to teach ELLs in both ESL and native languages. The council recommends:

- Focus on higher education teacher preparation and in-service professional development;
- School review of programs for ELLs by language of instruction and teacher qualifications; and
- Long-and short-term plan to address the personnel shortage in ESL, Bilingual, and Bilingual/ESL Special Education. We recommend members of the council be involved in this process.

The Task Force on 21st Century Skills and Council Recommendations: The 21st Century Skills listed below are focused on areas of strength for ELLs, who arrive at school with a world language and knowledge of another world culture. These strengths should be capitalized on for the benefit of the common good.

“21st Century Skills Core Subjects include proficiency in World languages, Global Awareness, and Civic Literacy. ELLs have developed a first World language that when capitalized on, is a resource for Massachusetts. Rather than abandon this first World language, and later require ELLs to learn foreign language, the council recommends that Two-way bilingual programs be widely promoted in MA schools. This will build the World language capacity of native English language speakers and ELLs. Effective two-way programs will also promote cultural understanding and “learning from and working collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in personal, work and community contexts, and the understanding of other nations and cultures, including the use of non-English languages.” Additionally Two-way programs promote Civic Literacy “exercising the rights and obligations of citizenship at local, state, national and global levels, and understanding the local and global implications of civic decisions” (Task Force on 21st Century Skills).

The council recommendations: Focusing on the variety and richness of languages and cultures from around the world that ELLs bring to school and the skills required by 21st Century.

Summary of Council Recommendations

Using the varying expertise of the council members, the council has made essential recommendations in response to the Commissioner’s Charge to the advisory councils that will serve to reduce the achievement gap for ELLs through research-based educational programs, while providing all students with 21st Century Skills. Thus, the council’s recommendations will improve the quality of education for all students in MA. The recommendations of the council are cost effective. In the short term, implementations of the recommendations will reduce the misrepresentation of ELLs in special education programs. Additionally, ARRA funding can be used for many of the initiatives. In the long term, the recommendations will serve to decrease the drop-out rates for ELLs, which is costly in terms of both dollars and human resources.

IV. COUNCIL DETAILS

ESE Administrator: Kathryn Riley and Julia D. Phelps, Acting Director for Curriculum and Instruction

ESE Council Liaison: Elizabeth O’Connell, Administrative Assistant

Chairperson(s):

Kathy Frye, ELL Academic Supervisor, Boston Public Schools

Maria de Lourdes Serpa, Professor, Lesley University

Members of the 2008-2009 Advisory Council:

Gary Abdullah, Swampscott Public Schools

Colleen Billings, Salem Public Schools

Suzanne Coffin, Haverhill Public Schools

Michaela Colombo, Assistant Professor Education, UMass Lowell

Julie Coppola, Boston University

Victoria Ekk, Principal, North Attleboro Public Schools
Mary Grace Fusco, ELL Director, Chelsea Public Schools
Jan Lopez Fellows, ESL Teacher, Salem Public Schools
Karen Luttenberger, ELL Director, Berkshire Hills Regional Schools
Sergio Paez, ELL Director, Worcester Public Schools
Leah Palmer, ESL Teacher, Wellesley Public Schools
Susan Schwartz, ESL Teacher, Methuen Public Schools

Council Meeting Dates:

September 10th, 2009

Future dates for both advisory council and sub-group meetings will be decided at this meeting and posted on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's English Language Learner's Website.

Gifted and Talented Advisory Council

I. INTRODUCTION

The Gifted and Talented Advisory Council's sample template for districts or schools to use in creating an identification process for the gifted has been used in training districts throughout the state. This template includes sample forms, flow charts, sample letters, etc. The processes follow the standards for identification of the gifted as set by the National Association for Gifted Children. The council presents a report of recommended actions to mandate gifted services throughout all school districts and gifted professional learning for new teacher training. The council continues to advocate for state funding for the education of the gifted in every school district.

II. 2008-2009 WORK OF THE COUNCIL

Charge to the advisory councils: Your feedback and input will be invaluable to us as we move forward in our work, and we thank you in advance for your commitment and dedication to public education in the Commonwealth.

Commissioner's Chester's Charge:

- Use the talent and expertise you have within your council to make suggestions for closing the achievement gap and the expectation gap;
- Make suggestions on relevant aspects of:
 - The Board's and Commissioner's Working Goals and Priorities;
 - The Board's Task Force on 21st Century Skills recommendations, and/or;
 - The Governor's Final Readiness Report recommendations.

The Gifted and Talented Advisory Council's mission and goals for 2009 were to act as an advisor to the Board and to districts that are establishing gifted programming through Department funding for gifted programming.

The council has researched and presents in this report a series of recommendations for actions. These actions include:

- Requiring gifted and talented (GT) topics in elementary teacher certification programs;
- Creating coursework standards for Academically Advanced licensure and for professional development requirements for those serving GT students; and
- Mandating the identification and service of GT students, with focus on inclusive representation.

Responding to Commissioner Chester's Charge

In his memorandum, Charge to the Advisory Councils, 2008-2009, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education Mitchell Chester directed all advisory councils to focus on suggestions for closing the achievement gap and the expectation gap. Accordingly, the Gifted and Talented Advisory Council has researched how best practices in gifted and talented education can narrow

both gaps when applied in schools with significant low socioeconomic status (LSES) and English language learner (ELL) populations.

Findings at a glance:

- LSES and ELL students who are also gifted are doubly at risk for underachievement; and
- Best GT practices significantly raise these students' achievement and have been applied with similar effect to the broader LSES & ELL school population.

Bright, disadvantaged students are doubly at risk

It is well understood that low socioeconomic status (LSES) and English language learner (ELL) students are at risk for underachievement. Lower expectations, less-rigorous programming, limited enrichment, fewer skilled teachers, and challenging home circumstances are among the factors contributing to this risk.ⁱ

It is also known that GT students are at special risk for underachievement. Gifted children typically make less academic gain during each school year than do average and below average students. They spend a great deal of their time re-learning material they have already mastered, they underachieve to fit in, and they drop out in greater proportion than average students. Additionally, GT students with learning disabilities often are not presented with sufficient challenge in strength areas.ⁱⁱ

Because GT LSES and ELL students are doubly at risk for underachievementⁱⁱⁱ but have the potential for very high achievement, addressing their educational needs can produce a high return on investment in terms of raising school achievement scores.

Raising gifted and talented low socioeconomic status and English language learner student achievement

There are a number of established best practices for teaching GT students.

For example, the following have been shown to raise GT achievement:

- Structured enrichment;
- Differentiation;
- Curriculum compacting;
- Acceleration;
- Independent projects; and
- Project-based learning.

Although LSES and ELL students are underrepresented in most gifted programs, the research shows that LSES and ELL GT students respond well to such programming. The Boston-based program A Better Chance (ABC) has identified and educated more than 8,000 gifted minority students over a span of 30 years, and 96 percent of those students have completed bachelor's degrees. Thirty eight percent went on to complete master's degrees, and 7 percent pursued doctorates.^{iv} One study found no dropouts from a gifted minority program after twelve years, as opposed to a 45 percent dropout rate among gifted minorities who were not accepted to gifted programming.^v

Best practices can raise any student

More and more research is suggesting that best GT practices are actually best practices for teaching any student.^{vi} Any student who has mastered a given skill can have her curriculum compacted, which means she can test out of instruction on that skill, and use the freed-up time to

learn about another topic in greater depth. Every teacher should know how to differentiate lessons, where he offers the material in various ways so that it is accessible to students with different learning styles and abilities. Enrichment can take the form of whole-school assemblies, after-school group activities, or in-class projects during compacted time. Acceleration through a subject or grade level has been shown to be extremely effective, and does not cause the social ostracism it was once thought to produce.^{vii}

GT pedagogy raises test scores among all students in LSES schools

Research is also suggesting that best GT practices can have a large impact at underperforming schools, even when applied to non-GT students. Beginning in 2000, North Carolina extended GT style instruction to entire LSES early elementary programs, resulting in dramatic score improvements in math and marked improvement in teacher skills.^{viii} Researchers also enjoyed the same results in a similar partnership between GT experts and an underperforming elementary school in Connecticut.^{ix}

III. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

To bring GT best practices to bear on the achievement and expectation gaps, the advisory council recommends the following:

Recommendations at a glance

- Require GT topics in elementary teacher certification programs;
- Create coursework standards for Academically Advanced licensure and for professional development requirements for those serving GT students; and
- Mandate the identification and service of GT students, with focus on inclusive representation.

To bring GT best practices to bear on the achievement and expectation gaps, the advisory council recommends the following:

- All elementary teacher certification programs should include a minimum of 9 clock hours of instruction related to GT traits and differentiation strategies, as well as the production of at least one lesson plan that shows proficiency in differentiating instruction for the gifted;
- There should be a standard course path leading to Massachusetts' Academically Advanced licensure. Suggested standards have already been drafted by the National Association for Gifted Children and the Council for Exceptional Children. There should, furthermore, be related professional development requirements for practitioners serving gifted children;
- Massachusetts should join the 34 states that mandate the identification of gifted students and the 29 states that require that services be provided to those students;
- Methods used to identify gifted and talented minority students should not rely heavily on standardized test scores, as many state proficiency exams and IQ tests are culturally biased. The more appropriate method to identify gifted minority students is an analysis of potential, rather than performance. Students should be evaluated via a profile or portfolio that includes input from parents, teachers, peers, creativity measures, and (not or) a review of project-based class work, with grades and scores as a footnote;
- Teachers should be educated to address any misconceptions they may hold regarding minority students; this will help them recognize students' potential, and increase referrals to gifted services. Many still believe that minorities are a homogenous group in need of

remedial education, while others chronically misinterpret culturally-based behaviors. Training teachers to recognize behavior that at first glance may appear antisocial, but actually indicates high intelligence or creativity will also increase the likelihood that a teacher will become a source of support and resiliency for one or more students. Werner's 30-year study of high-risk children found that the students who were able to succeed despite severe social handicaps (poverty, troubled family environment, uneducated parents) did so because they had an informal support network, usually spearheaded by a teacher^x; and

- Parents should also be educated about the characteristics of gifted children, the opportunities available to gifted students, and the importance of gifted programming, particularly if they believe that the programs are for whites only, or will cause their child to lose his cultural identity.^{xi}

In Summary

Bringing best GT practices out of selective classrooms in high performing schools and into the places where they are needed most will close the achievement and expectation gaps faster than any punitive policy or remedial pedagogy. Best GT practices exemplify the kind of highly differentiated, intrinsically motivating, and 21st Century oriented teaching that looks and moves forward. Making sure these practices are part of every teacher's toolbox and especially that LSES and ELL students benefit from them ought to be major priorities for the Department. The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department should mandate gifted services and professional learning about gifted learners in our state.

ⁱ Ford, D. (2006). Closing the achievement gap: How gifted education can help. *Gifted Child Today*, 29:4.

ⁱⁱ For compiled citations on gifted underachievement, see:

Center for comprehensive school reform and improvement (2008). Gifted and talented students at risk for underachievement. Issue brief.

Reis, S. (2008) Research that supports the need for and benefits of gifted education. Report for National Association for Gifted Children.

Mass. ESE Gifted and Talented Advisory Council (2004). Gifted education in Massachusetts. Position paper.

ⁱⁱⁱ Wyner J., Bridgeland, J., DiIulio, J. (2007). Achievement trap: How America is failing millions of high-achieving students from lower-income families. A report by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation & Civic Enterprises with original research by Westat.

^{iv} Griffin, J. (1992) Catching the dream for gifted children of color. *Gifted Child Quarterly*. 36:3

^v Smith, J., LeRose, B. & Clasen, R. E. (1991). Underrepresentation of minority students in gifted programs: Yes! It matters! *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 35, 81-83.

^{vi} For compiled citations on using GT practices with a general student audience, see:

Reis, S. Research that supports using the school wide enrichment model and extensions of gifted education pedagogy to meet the needs of all students.

<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/sem/semresearch.html>

^{vii} Reis (2008).

^{viii} North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2005). Project Bright IDEA 1: Interest development early abilities: A model K-2 nurturing program - 2001-2004.

<http://www.aagc.org/FinalReport52705.pdf>

^{ix} Beecher, M. & Sweeny, S. (2008). Closing the achievement gap with curriculum enrichment and differentiation: One school's story. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 19.

^x Werner, E. & Smith, R. (1992) *Overcoming the odds: High risk children from birth to adolescence*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press

^{xi} For one paper compiling research on increasing representation of diverse students in GT programming, see:

Ford, D., Grantham, T. & Whiting, G. (2008). Culturally and linguistically diverse students in gifted education: Recruitment and retention issues. *Exceptional Children*, 74:3

IV. COUNCIL DETAILS

ESE Administrator: Susan Wheltle, Director of the Office of the Humanities, History, Social Science

ESE Council Liaison: Deborah Walker

Chairperson(s): Sylvia Jordan (Chair) Principal, Newbury Elementary School, Triton Regional School District

Aimee Yermish (Vice Chair) Gifted and Talented Consultant, daVinci Learning Center, Stow

Members of the 2008-2009 Advisory Council:

William Carey, Community Representative

Geraldine Creedon, State Representative

Jake Giessman, Head of School, Academy Hill, Springfield

Linda K. Morgan, Parent and Partner, Morgan & Pratt, LLP

Donna Potter-Astion, Teacher, Berkshire Hills Regional School District

Renee Voorhess, Librarian, Acton-Boxborough Regional High School

Council Meeting Dates: December, 3, 2009; March 10, 2009 and May, 10, 2009

Global Advisory Council

I. INTRODUCTION

The Global Education Advisory Council (GEAC) is committed to infusing a global perspective into existing Massachusetts curriculum. In addition to advising and providing information to the Commissioner about how to engage students in learning about our changing world, the council acts as a liaison between Global Education Massachusetts (GEM), and the Massachusetts Department of Secondary and Elementary Education (ESE) council members also collaborate with the global education committee of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS) and with the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association (MSSAA).

In a year when there has been a surge of interest in global education and the importance of 21st Century Skills among Massachusetts' educational leaders, the work of GEAC focused on advocating for the integration of global education into other curriculum disciplines as linked to economic, environmental, and humanitarian issues in today's world. This was in part accomplished through the distribution of a collaboratively produced DVD on the need for global education and a CD of global education curriculum sources, the development of a position paper to promote global education in Massachusetts schools for the leaders of the ESE and other advisory councils, and a substantive review and discussion of the White Paper: Recommendations for the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's Task Force in 21st Century Skills. In its recommendations in this report, GEAC reinforces recommendations from the White Paper that it supports.

II. 2008-2009 WORK OF THE COUNCIL

In the past year, in its efforts to encourage the infusion of global education into Massachusetts, GEAC:

- Distributed the DVD "Preparing Students for Success in Today's Interconnected World" (posted on You Tube at <http://www.video.com/21115187>) to the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrator's Association (MSSAA), the Curriculum Leadership Center at Bridgewater State College, the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association (MaFLA) and other education groups, and GEAC produced this DVD in collaboration with EF Education and GEM and features Secretary of Education Paul Reville, Dana Mohler-Faria, superintendents, and business leaders;
- Distributed the CD "Meeting the Challenge of Global Education: Resources for Educators" to the above named organizations;
- Produced a position paper with a set of recommendations for ESE actions to promote global education in Massachusetts. This paper was sent to Commissioner Chester, Deputy Commissioners Jeffrey Nellhaus and Karla Baehr, the Chair of the Massachusetts Board of Education Maura Banta, and the chairs of all the advisory councils. The position paper was sent to all councils as global education is interdisciplinary and cuts across many curriculum areas. GEAC initiated this position paper when funding for global education was in the ESE budget. When this funding was cut, GEAC revised the position paper to

be consistent with the language of directives from the Commissioner and the Board of Education to the advisory councils; and

- Reviewed and discussed the White Paper on 21st Century Skills and identified complementary areas that GEAC could effectively and enthusiastically support. These areas are found in the next section of recommendations. (for copies of the White Paper contact GEAC Liaison John Keh)

III. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our work and discussions, GEAC makes the following recommendations to the ESE for next steps:

- Appoint GEAC members to serve on frameworks and curriculum review committees to ensure that a global perspective is infused into revised frameworks and assessments;
- Develop connections with other advisory councils (ie., Service Learning, Technology and Engineering, Science and Math) to promote a global perspective in their work;
- Work with ESE to organize the first conference on Best Practices for Global Education with breakout workshops that demonstrate replicable curriculum examples. Invite professional educational organizations to collaborate in the planning and in the presentation: MASS, MASCD, MSSAA, MaFLA, United Nations Association of Greater Boston, as well as Primary Source, NCTA, Facing History and Ourselves, and The China Exchange Initiative;
- Locate and disseminate, in print and on-line, replicable best practices. Create and update a curriculum resource bank. Feature and reward exemplary programs;
- Expand current foreign language offerings throughout the state to include critical need languages and require the K-12 study of world languages in the context of developing cultural understanding and global citizenship;
- Explore strategies for integrating the global diversity in our school populations into global education teaching models;
- Support pre-professional and professional development for teachers, so that they can infuse their teaching with wider global knowledge, while working with state-level educational organizations to provide professional development and resources to bring global education to scale in Massachusetts;
- Collaborate with departments of education in other states to share new information, practices and lessons learned, and build/contribute to a common knowledge base;
- Research opportunities and oversee grant writing for federal and foundation funding of world languages, professional development and international exchanges; and
- Provide mini-grants/seed money to provide professional development for teachers and administrators, including grants for international study tours, infusing global education into existing curriculum, developing global education related service learning models, and awarding outstanding global education teaching.

We look forward to having leadership at the state level to prepare our students for their futures in the 21st Century. The time is right to provide Massachusetts students with a world-class education, which includes learning about the world in which we live and learning to function well cross-culturally.

IV. COUNCIL DETAILS

ESE Administrator: Susan Wheltle, Director of the Office of Curriculum Standards

ESE Council Liaison: John Keh, Social Studies Consultant

Chairperson: Thomas Gwin, Principal, Winchester High School

Members of the 2008-2009 Advisory Council:

Anthony Bent, Superintendent, Shrewsbury Public Schools

Ann Bradshaw, Superintendent, Mashpee Public Schools

Janet Buerklin, K-8 Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator, Newton Public Schools

Joanne Campbell, English Department Chair, Lexington High School

Carlo Cipollone, Italian Consulate Representative

Janice Doppler, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Gateway Regional School District

Phyllis Dragonas, Deputy Superintendent, Melrose Public Schools

Carolyn Henderson, Director, The China Exchange Initiative

Elizabeth Lewis-Goodman, GEAC and Primary Source; former Curriculum Coordinator, Canton Public Schools

Kongli Liu, Citizen of Massachusetts, Bryant University Confucius Center,

Katherine Lopez Natale, former president, Massachusetts Foreign Language Association

John McEwan, Superintendent, Whitman-Hanson Public Schools

Vincent McKay, Assistant Superintendent, Somerville Public Schools

Margaret Morgan, Principal, Hale Middle School, Stow Public Schools

Marylee Rambaud, Professor, Boston University

Mary Alice Samii, Teacher, Lexington Public Schools

Laurie Schmidt; Teacher, Winchester Public Schools

Mary Ann Svenning, Teacher-Librarian, Wayland Public Schools

Jalene Tamerat, Teacher, Josiah Quincy Upper School, Boston Public Schools

Linda Triplett, Assistant Professor, Lesley University

Elaine Cawley Weintraub, History Department Head, Martha's Vineyard Regional High School

Ginny Kime WanZaid, Psychologist, Ralph Talbot Primary School, Weymouth Public Schools

Council Meeting Dates: September 18, 2008; November 3, 2008; January 14, 2009; March 31, 2009; and May 14, 2009

Interdisciplinary Health Education and Human Services Advisory Council

I. INTRODUCTION

In October, the Interdisciplinary Health Education and Human Services Advisory Council (IHEHS) Advisory Council gave advice and feedback on the development of the 5-year strategic plan of the Department's CDC-funded Coordinated School Health Program. After attending the all-council meeting in November, the IHEHS Advisory Council formed five working subcommittees, each focusing on one of the five Board's and Commissioner's Working Goals and Priorities. These groups completed several tasks related to supporting the health education and human services work of the Department.

Accomplishments included:

- Developing and implementing an on-line survey of current Massachusetts health education, physical education, and family/consumer sciences teachers regarding their professional preparation and current work situation;
- Writing two letters to the Commissioner and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the first requesting a revision of the Comprehensive Health Curriculum Frameworks and the second asking for changes in procedures for advisory council meetings and selection of chairs. The advisory council also heard and discussed a presentation from John Bynoe, Associate Commissioner, on the new Behavioral Health Task Force.

II. 2008-2009 WORK OF THE COUNCIL

An initial activity of the IHEHS Advisory Council for the 2008-2009 school year was to help in the development of the 5-Year Strategic Plan of the Department's CDC-funded Coordinated School Health Program. Council members participated in a "SWOT" analysis, analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing health education and human services programs in Massachusetts schools, and then discussed strategies and priorities for the 5-year funding period of the Coordinated School Health Program.

The IHEHS divided into subcommittees to design and implement projects that would support the Commissioner's Working Goals and Priorities. Below is a list of the subcommittee actions.

State Leadership and Operations

- Drafted a letter to the Commissioner requesting state funding for two new positions, a health education liaison and a physical education liaison; and
- Wrote a letter to the Commissioner requesting reimbursement equity and a change in procedures to select the advisory council chairperson.

Educator Development

- Designed and implemented an online survey distributed to health, physical education, and family and consumer science teachers to determine the status of educators teaching

comprehensive school health. Further recommendations will be based on analyses of data collected in this survey.

Supports for Students and Families

- Reviewed the current 321 legislation calling for a school behavioral health task force. Discussed different methods and models of mental/behavioral health programs in schools, and read a research summary of approaches to comprehensive and coordinated student support systems in schools.
- Began planning the best way to collaborate with the Behavioral Health Task Force, headed by John Bynoe.

Curriculum and Instruction

Sent a letter to the Commissioner requesting to advance the revision date of the Comprehensive Health Curriculum Frameworks from 2011 to 2009. Began the development of a document showing how comprehensive school health education supports the 21st Century Learning Skills initiative.

Accountability Redesign

- Requested the release of the Physical Education Report in order to promote information and accountability regarding M.G.L. 71, Section 3 and physical education. This would encourage superintendents to look at strengths aligning with the PE Report, identify benchmarks and gaps, and create a plan for improving their physical education programs;
- Began developing recommendations regarding the monitoring of Wellness Policies. One recommendation will be to encourage districts to post their wellness policies on their websites; and
- Began developing recommendations regarding school district advisory councils, including the recommendation that such advisory councils meet at least four times per year, that they be structured along the lines of the coordinated school health model, and that they include parents, as consistent with the National PTA Standards for Family School Partnerships (www.pta.org/national_standards.asp).

III. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

The IHEHS Advisory Council has made the following recommendations:

- The council recommends that there be reimbursement equity among the various councils and that there be a change in procedures to select the advisory council chairperson.
- The council recommends that the date to revise the Comprehensive Health Curriculum Frameworks be changed to 2009.

IV. COUNCIL DETAILS

ESE Administrator: Kathleen C. Millett

ESE Council Liaison: Carol Goodenow

Chairperson: Mary Connolly

Members of the 2008-2009 Advisory Council:

Marc Alterio, Health and Wellness Consultant

Robert Wade Anthony, Director, Adolescent Wellness

Patricia Boland, Health Educator, Berkshire Hills Regional School District
Lydia Burak, Associate Professor of Health Education, Bridgewater State College
Mary Connolly, Instructor, Cambridge College
Nancy Carpenter, Director, MA Coalition of School-Based Health Centers
Kathleen DeFillippo, Health and Nursing Services Coordinator, Lawrence Public Schools
Patricia Degon, Health and Physical Education Director, Shrewsbury Public Schools
William Fonseca, Chair, Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative
Jean Fox, Coordinator, Youth Development Programs, New Bedford
Evelyn Frankford, Consultant
Denise Gaudette, Program Director, New Bedford Public Schools
Ellie Goldberg, Consultant
Nancy Golder, Nurse, Great Brook Valley Health Center
Kathleen Hart, Department of Early Education and Care (agency representative)
Christine Kenney, Department of Youth Services (agency representative)
Mary Ellen Kirrane, K-8 Health and Wellness Director, Brockton Public Schools
Mary Lutz, Department of Children and Families (agency representative)
Donna Marshall, Department of Early Education and Care (agency representative)
Joan Mikula, Department of Mental Health (agency representative)
Isaac Pugh, Department of Children and Families (agency representative)
Robert Reardon, Case Manager, Tapestry
Anne Sheetz, Director of School Health Services, Dept. of Public Health (agency representative)
Lorraine Thornhill, Senior Pastor, First Holiness Church
Victor Vasquez, Department of Transitional Assistance (agency representative)
Coleen Walsh, Director of Health, PE, and Family/Consumer Sciences, Springfield Public Schools
Thomas Zaya, Wellness Department Director, Reading High School

Council Meeting Dates: October 17, 2008; November 3, 2008; January 23, 2009; March 27, 2009; and May 15, 2009

Life Management Skills Advisory Council

I. INTRODUCTION

Established in 2007, the vision of the Life Management Skills Advisory Council (LMS) is for “students to become responsible individuals who are independent learners and productive members of society, who can function alone, within a family, and as contributing members of the community.” This mirrors the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s Framework for Leadership and Action (2006), “to work in partnership with policy makers, communities, parents, school districts, and students to build a system that will prepare all students to succeed as productive and contributing members of our democratic society and the global economy.”

The objectives for the LMS Advisory Council are to:

- Identify the knowledge and life skill sets necessary to fulfill the council’s and the Department’s vision;
- Identify examples of delivery mechanisms that incorporate accountability; and
- Promote integration of life management skills into core academics.

During the past year, the council has continued to develop and refine *18 for 18s - A Guide for Entering Adulthood Responsibly*, an assessment tool designed to measure a student’s mastery of life skills, and to introduce these competencies as essential for students to move on to successful adulthood. The concept for developing *18 for 18s* evolved through a distributive evaluation process. In addition to literature reviews, the council examined each of the curriculum frameworks to identify potential areas of overlap and opportunities for integration. From five key content areas (Financial Literacy, Health, Food and Nutrition, Safety, Civic, Legal and Personal Responsibility, and Workplace and Community Relations) the LMS Advisory Council identified skills such as oral communication, critical thinking, media literacy, problem-solving, teamwork/collaboration and self-directed learning and leadership, as well as financial literacy and cultural competency. For each of the five life skill content areas, questions were developed as situations or scenarios with 4-5 possible answer choices; each answer choice included a brief explanation of why that choice is correct, incorrect or some combination thereof. In many cases there is no right or wrong answer, and explanations for the answer choices are described in relative terms of good or bad choices. We continued to explore various delivery methods as part of required and enrichment courses. The council further considered outside consultation and potential collaboration with Framingham State College to survey and/or conduct focus groups with different secondary and post-secondary populations. The intended purpose of the surveys and focus groups was to identify educational gaps in achieving proficiency in life skills competencies. At the conclusion of this year, council members conducted a pilot study presenting and evaluating the impact and effectiveness of *18 for 18s* with students in a high school classroom setting.

II. 2008-2009 WORK OF THE COUNCIL

Charge to the Advisory Councils

My charge to you today is to focus your work this year on the challenges facing us all. Use the talent and expertise you have within your council to make suggestions for closing the achievement gap and the expectation gap.

The vision of the Life Management Skills Advisory Council is for students to become Independent learners and productive members of society, who can function alone, within a family, and as contributing members of the community. Members of the LMS Advisory Council have invested their time and expertise in redefining “expectations” of success to recognize that students must achieve “beyond” academic proficiencies in order “to succeed as productive and contributing members of our democratic society and the global economy” (Framework for Leadership and Action, 2006).

The LMS Advisory Council suggests that:

- Greater support is needed from the Commissioner and the Board to enable students, educators, administrators, parents and community members to feel encouraged in developing and offering opportunities for life skills education;
- The achievement and expectation of life skills mastery be recognized as an essential component of educating the whole child; and
- Support for integration and application of life skills into core academic content/curriculum areas is needed.

Make suggestions on relevant aspects of The Board’s and Commissioner’s Working Goals and Priorities

The Life Management Advisory Council’s February 24, 2009 meeting featured a presentation by Katie Millett on behalf of John Bynoe, Associate Commissioner to help our group better understand how this council fits into the Commissioner’s goals and priorities. While “Supports for Students and Families” through district and community systems, school and classroom were emphasized, this council also recognizes the importance and opportunities to utilize classroom and school-based systems to enhance curriculum and instruction. The potential for utilizing 18 for 18s - A Guide to Entering Adulthood Responsibly as a high quality instructional tool was introduced with a pilot test of this tool as a modest PowerPoint presentation in a classroom setting.

This spring, the LMS Advisory Council co-chair and member, Richard Andrea and Cindy Alemian Rice conducted a pilot study of 18 for 18s - A Guide to Entering Adulthood Responsibly to determine the extent to which: 1) the areas identified by the council were relevant to students; and 2) students would respond to the proposed question/response format. The content and questions were rated on a scale from 1 to 4, with 1 = Not at all, 4 = Very much. The pilot study included six of the 18 question sets (automobile safety, house safety, credit card issues, cooking/healthy choices, food safety, and job search skills) arranged in a PowerPoint (PPT) presentation format, incorporating simple graphics and text. Senior students from Blue Hills Regional High School (Canton, MA) were selected to participate in the pilot study. These 42 students represented 3 "shop areas" of their school - Culinary Arts, Cosmetology, and CAD departments. During the presentation, students viewed two PPT slides: one with the question and simple graphic, and the second repeating the question with possible responses. Students were then asked to select their best answer choice and record it on an answer sheet. After students recorded their answers, the instructor continued with PPT slides of all the answer choices and accompanying explanations. At the conclusion of each question/response set, students completed

a questionnaire, rating the content of the questions, answer choices, and explanations for each answer choice. This process was repeated with each of the six Life Skills questions, responses, explanations and questionnaire.

A preliminary analysis of the results of this pilot study is encouraging. Overall, the responses from students were favorable regarding the relevancy of the questions, their perceived importance in their lives, and the content of the answers and explanations of each.

- **Importance or relevance:** When asked how important or relevant the topic and information were, on a scale from 1 to 4 (with 1 = Not at all, 4 = Very much), the average score for the six questions was 3.2. Of the six life skill areas, food safety was perceived to be most relevant (3.6); cooking/eating healthy was least relevant (2.6).
- **Usefulness:** When asked if the explanatory information provided for each answer was useful, the average score for the 6 questions was 3.0. Of the six life skill areas: automobile safety was rated as most useful (3.4); cooking/eating healthy was least useful (2.4).
- **Motivating:** When asked if the questions inspired them to look for more information on that subject, the students were less positive, with an average score of 2.0, the highest rated question being job search (2.5) and lowest being cooking/eating healthy (1.8).

Students rated the format favorably rating the graphics imbedded in the question and answer slides, with an average score of 2.2 (out of 4) for the 6 questions combined. We believe it is essential that colorful graphics be included in the final product for visual interest and attention retention.

These preliminary findings indicate that *18 for 18s - A Guide to Entering Adulthood Responsibly* would be well received by students, parents and teachers. While students did not appear to be “inspired” to seek additional information as a result of reviewing these questions, this response may reflect the way the product is designed. At the same time, however, this response may be attributed to the effectiveness of *18 for 18s - A Guide to Entering Adulthood Responsibly* as a teaching tool in itself, imbedding sufficient information in the question and answer/explanations to satisfy any further needs for information that students may have.

In general, and looking forward, the LMS Advisory Council, with the support of the Commissioner and Board, would continue to develop this product aligning with the Commissioner’s goals and priorities to provide high quality curriculum and instruction for all students. Based upon the positive results of the pilot study, this council would like to refine the format, features and delivery mechanisms to better meet the needs of diverse audiences and settings. (For a copy of the report on the pilot study or draft of *18 for 18s - A Guide for entering Adulthood Responsibly* contact LMS liaison Rita Brennan Olson.)

The Board’s Task Force on 21st Century Skills Recommendations

Based upon its 2007 vision statement “to develop responsible individuals who are independent learners and productive members of society, who can function alone, within a family, and as contributing members of the community” and activities, the Life Management Skills Advisory Council has demonstrated a commitment to furtherance of critical skills necessary for students to succeed in the 21st Century economy. This core belief is evident in the continued development of the *18 for 18 s - A Guide to Entering Adulthood Responsibly*, as an assessment and instructional tool for student, parents and educators. In designing this tool, the LMS Advisory

Council identified skills such as oral communication, critical thinking, financial and media literacy, problem-solving, teamwork/collaboration and self-directed learning and leadership, and cultural competency. As we continue to consider a variety of delivery mechanisms directed toward student and adult end-users; we ask the Board to support our efforts. We also suggest that the Board assist with future endeavors that may involve professional, curriculum and teacher development in these 18 areas.

The Governor's Final Readiness Report Recommendations

18 for 18s - A Guide to Entering Adulthood Responsibly is a potential instrument for addressing Readiness Project Goal #3 through questions, guided responses and access to resources that will help prepare students them for "lifelong social, economic and civic success." As a tool designed for students to be used along with teachers and/or parents, *18 for 18s* also addresses Goal #1 by engaging and mobilizing "families and other sectors of society to provide the education" and services needs for students to succeed at school. This council would like to recommend support for its efforts to vet the *18 for 18s* product with sub-committees of the Readiness Project as well as other Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Advisory Councils.

III. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

This Council would like to recommend support for its efforts:

- To vet the *18 for 18s* product with sub-committees of the Readiness Project as well as other Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Advisory Councils;
- To assist with opportunities for professional, curriculum and teacher development in *18 for 18s - A Guide to Entering Adulthood Responsibly*;
- Greater emphasis and support from the Commissioner and the Board to enable students, educators, administrators, parents and community members to feel encouraged in developing and offering opportunities for life skills education;
- Recognition that achievement and expectation of life skills mastery is an essential component of educating the whole child; and
- Support integration and application of life skills (*18 for 18s - A Guide to Entering Adulthood Responsibly*) into core academic content/curriculum areas with help refining the format, features and delivery mechanisms to better meet the needs of diverse audiences and settings.

IV. COUNCIL DETAILS

ESE Administrator: Kathleen Millett, Office of Nutrition Health and Safety

Council Liaison: Rita Brennan Olson, Nutrition Education and Training Coordinator

Chairpersons: Sylvia Stevens-Edouard, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Boston
Richard Andrea, Blue Hills Regional High School

Members of the 2008-2009 Advisory Council

Cindy Alemian Rice, CEO, Eastern Mass Food Safety

Angela Cairra, Guidance Counselor, Shawsheen Valley Technical High School

Kim Gangwisch-Marsh, Guidance Counselor, Franklin County Technical High School

Linda Hunchak Rohr, Family and Consumer Studies Educator, Silver Lake Middle School

Shirley Chao, Director of Nutrition, Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs

Pat Luoto, Professor, Food and Nutrition, Framingham State College

John Magnarelli, Director Special Nutrition Programs, US Department of Agriculture Northeast Region/Duxbury School Committee

Margaret McEwan, Vice President of Corporate Communications (retired), Shaw's Supermarkets

John McKinnon, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

Gloria Santa Anna, Project Coordinator, University of Massachusetts Labor Management Workplace Education Program

Suzanne Shaw, Special Education Consultant

Todd Stewart, Social Studies Educator-Quabbin Regional Middle School and Director, Camp Putnam

Council Meeting Dates: July 31, 2008; August 25, 2008; September 16, 2008; October 21, 2008; November 3, 2008; January 20, 2009; February 24, 2009; April 8, 2009; and May 12, 2009

Mathematics and Science Advisory Council

I. INTRODUCTION

This year the council worked as two subcommittees, mathematics and science, to address timely and relevant issues specific to each discipline. The science subcommittee addressed the Commissioner's Working Goals and Priority related to Curriculum and Instruction (completing the science framework review) and 21st Century Skills. The current *Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework* has a strong emphasis on science content and generally excludes science practices and skills. With a consensus across national research [1] on the importance of learning science skills in addition to science content, and an agreement among committee members of the direct relationships between science skills and 21st Century Skills, the science subcommittee would like to see the upcoming framework review include an explicit incorporation of science skills into standards.

The Mathematics Subcommittee Took up the Commissioner's Charge of Educator Development

- “Work in partnership with key stakeholders to establish an elective educator workforce development system, including recruitment, preparation, licensure, license renewal, induction, mentoring, supervision, evaluation, and career enhancement.” Continuing last year's work, this subcommittee concentrated on one aspect of the system that needs immediate attention: the quality of professional development programs that claim to provide content preparation and enhancement.

There are opportunities, some of which were described in the appendices of last year's report, for teachers in the State to access high-quality mathematics programs [2]. Unfortunately, there are many other programs that do little to enhance teachers' content knowledge, programs that masquerade as mathematics and that offer professional development points or graduate credit in return for a price and little else.

Currently, oversight of professional development programs is hamstrung by two “wild cards” in the State's recertification guidelines

- Local districts can design or commission professional development activities that grant PDPs which count towards recertification with pro forma approval from the State; and
- Institutions of Higher Education can design professional development activities that grant graduate credits which count towards recertification with no approval from the State.

II. 2008-2009 WORK OF THE COUNCIL

Science focused on developing recommendations for the upcoming Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework review while mathematics has developed recommendations for enhancing the quality of educator development opportunities.

III. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

Science Recommendation 1: We recommend that the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) revise the state Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework to embed student learning outcomes for scientific skills into each content topic at all grade spans.

Accomplishing these outcomes will require implementation of inquiry and experiential learning to support each content standard.

The National Science Education Standards define inquiry in this way:

- Scientific inquiry refers to the diverse ways in which scientists study the natural world and propose explanations based on the evidence derived from their work. Inquiry also refers to the activities of students in which they develop knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, as well as an understanding of how scientists study the natural world (National Science Education Standards, p. 26.)

Thus, inquiry in science education includes the exploration of scientific concepts by students, through the manipulation, observation and measurement of real-world systems, as well as student formulation and experimental testing of hypotheses based on their present and previous physical experience and theoretical knowledge. Through experiential inquiry, students actually come to “understand” and “apply” the scientific discoveries, concepts and skills they are studying.

We therefore recommend that the Department identify central science skills and embed those in sequential, developmental expectations for student learning outcomes into the framework for every content topic.

Science Recommendation 2: The National Standards documents also point out that inquiry is both a learning goal and a teaching method, and the National Standards, unlike our state framework, also include an organized framework of teaching standards. They address inquiry in this way:

- **Teaching standard D:** Teachers of science design and manage learning environments that provide students with the time, space, and resources needed for learning science. (National Science Education Standards, p. 43)

Since the Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Framework does not address science teaching methods or the availability of science teaching resources, *we recommend that issues of teacher professional development and adequate provision of resources to all teachers and students be addressed elsewhere, in conjunction with the current framework revision.* Our goal is to close science achievement gaps and insure that all students are prepared with 21st Century Skills. We believe that limiting our mission to the revision of testing standards, without provision of the means and equitable opportunity to achieve those standards is irresponsible and unacceptable.

Science Recommendation 3: We recommend that the Department develop guidance for districts in the Commonwealth in developing their own in-house capacity to assess students’ progress in concept formation (formative assessment systems) and intellectual development through inquiry and experiential activities.

Mathematics Recommendation 1: Establish oversight: The Commissioner and the Board should review the current recertification regulations and find ways to ensure the quality of professional development programs in mathematics that count towards recertification. In theory, implementation of this recommendation should be a matter of establishing rigorous standards for professional development courses in mathematics (see Recommendation 2) together with a process for reviewing and certifying programs that seek to meet those standards and, hence, have their credits count towards the content part of the recertification guidelines. But we understand that, in practice, this is not so easy. For one thing, it will require a reassessment of the current hands-on policy towards mathematics programs provided by districts and IHEs. For another, it costs money.

While school districts and IHEs are free to offer all kinds of courses for teachers, *it is within the purview of the Board to require that courses and programs that count as mathematics content (towards recertification) meet standards set at the State level.* Our ideas about how to set these standards are in Recommendation 2.

While some of our recommendations that follow are relatively inexpensive to implement, we know that there are non-trivial costs involved in implementing this one. But without changes in oversight, Massachusetts will continue to allow mediocre programs to provide credit towards recertification, and the goal of last year's MSAC report, that "all teachers should develop content knowledge at a level substantially above the level at which they teach," will never come to pass.

Establishing serious oversight would lead to long-term improvement in infrastructure, with most of the expense incurred in the initial years of design and implementation. *Hence this would be an ideal candidate for support via the ARRA stimulus funds.* We strongly recommend that the Board seek such support for this critically important work.

Mathematics Recommendation 2: Establish and publicize standards: The Department should create and publicize a new area on the career advancement section of the website that lays out standards for content-based professional development. This should be aimed at building a culture in the education community in which teachers and districts seek out programs that have goals like these.

To help teachers develop an attitude towards mathematics that characterizes it as:

- A discipline that makes sense;
- A discipline that is open to investigation and experiment;
- A discipline in which expertise consists of not only the knowledge of facts, but also an understanding of the reasons that these facts are true and an ability to reason with these facts in characteristically mathematical ways;
- A discipline that "affords knowledge and reasoning of extraordinary subtlety and beauty, even at the most elementary levels" [3];
- A discipline in which a small number of general principles and habits of mind bring coherence to the myriad of topics and techniques found in curricula, frameworks, and texts; and
- A discipline in which progress is often slow and deliberate, requiring intellectual stamina and dedication.

To help teachers develop an attitude towards teaching that characterizes it as:

- A profession that requires, like all mathematical professions, deep and specialized content knowledge, precise use of language, and intense curiosity;
- A profession that requires the development of other specialized skills including:
 - The skill of carefully planning and designing lessons that promote mathematical thinking, develop content, and promote communication, and the skill of “mining” student work (written and verbal) to uncover half-formed insights, to build on germs of important ideas, to diagnose errors, and to analyze misconceptions;
 - A profession, like many other mathematical professions, in which a major goal is to help others in this case students understand key results and methods; and
 - A profession that requires a dual passion and respect, both for doing mathematics and for working with children.

These goals should be held up as the gold standard for professional development programs. They should be publicized in mailings to superintendents, and programs that are given the right to offer PDPs and graduate credit that counts towards recertification should be required to state explicitly how they meet these benchmarks in ways that can be verified by observation or other methods (see Recommendations 3 and 4 below).

Mathematics Recommendation 3: Provide examples: The Commissioner and the Board should provide the field with concrete exemplars of high-quality professional development programs. The implementation of recommendations 1 and 2 will provide teachers and administrators with a new lens through which they can evaluate professional development offerings and an incentive to seek programs that meet the standards. And professional development providers will begin describing their programs in terms of the new standards. It will be necessary at this point to provide explicit examples of programs that the Department sees as exemplary in terms of instantiating the standards.

We discussed several ways in which the exemplars could be made widely available:

- The Commissioner and the Board should solicit and publish, on the Department website, position papers that lay out with examples, organizing principles, and sample syllabi what’s meant by quality content-based professional development programs. These papers should expand on the “10 hours on one topic” requirement, giving examples of mathematical coherence (the ways in which the topics in the course are connected via the major themes in the discipline itself) in professional development;
- The Commissioner and the Board should initiate a yearly day-long symposium that showcases high-quality content-based professional development and graduate programs around the state. Professional development providers could apply to present at the showcase, describing in their applications how their program meets the Department’s criteria; and
- There is no substitute for first-hand knowledge. Exemplary programs should be identified by visits to existing programs; by Department staff, by members of the MSAC, by mathematicians involved in education, or by analysis of self reports (see Recommendation 4).

Once the criteria are in place and concrete examples have been showcased, teachers and school districts will have the tools they need to seek out effective programs and providers will have the tools they need to create or revise their programs so that they are in line with the standards for quality mathematics programs for teachers.

Mathematics Recommendation 4: Seek out high quality programs: The Commissioner and the Board should provide professional developers with a mechanism for reporting the extent to which they meet the standards. For example, the Department could create a uniform template in which professional development providers can describe their programs, syllabi, and goals, with specific attention to and how the programs address the criteria described in Recommendation 2.

We understand that districts are currently required to report on their local professional development activities; this recommendation would extend that policy to all providers, using a revised form that highlights the alignment with the new standards. Setting up this system would be an ideal use of stimulus funds. The reports could then be made available to teachers and districts, providing them with a catalogue of sorts, so that they could choose programs using a consistent set of benchmarks.

Concluding Remarks about Educator Development

The recent MTEL results show that we have a long way to go to reach the goal of strengthening mathematics teaching across Massachusetts. As one council member put it, “Strengthening practice means shifting beliefs and assumptions about what it means to do and learn mathematics.” Our meetings this past year often turned to discussions of several high quality professional development programs that do just that. The major thrust of this year’s recommendations is to urge the Commissioner and the Board to find ways to ensure that *all* programs are closer in spirit to the ones we so admire.

References

- [1] National Research Council (2008). Ready, Set, Science!: Putting Research to Work in K-8 Science Classrooms. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.
- [2] Final Report of the 2008 Mathematics and Science Advisory Committee. Available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/sac/councils/math.html>
- [3] Mathematical Proficiency for All Students: Toward a Strategic Research and Development Program in Mathematics Education. Rand Mathematics Study Panel, 2003.

IV. COUNCIL DETAILS

ESE Administrator: Barbara Libby, Director of the Office of Math and Science

ESE Council Liaison: Jacob Foster and Sharyn Sweeney

Chairpersons: Al Cuoco, Senior Scientist & Director, Center for Math Education, Education Development Center (Mathematics subcommittee)

Reza Namin, Superintendent, Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District (Science subcommittee)

Members of the 2008-2009 Advisory Council:

Alfred Bird, Science & Mathematics Teacher, Boston Public Schools

Andrew Chen, President, EduTron Corporation

Lucia Dolan, Parent, Newton

Mary Eich, K-8 Math Coordinator, Newton Public Schools
Solomon Friedberg, Chairman, Department of Mathematics, Boston College
Naseem Jaffer, Mathematics Coach, Consultant
Jacqueline Miller, Senior Research Scientist, Education Development Center
Barnas Monteith, Senior Vice President, Advanced Diamond Solutions
John Mosto, Physics & Mathematics High School Teacher, Chelmsford Public Schools
Mary Porter, Chemistry & Biology Teacher, Revere High School
Nitzan Resnick, Director, The New Science and Math Initiative
Chris Rogers, Director, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Tufts University
Carla Romney, Science & Engineering Department Chair, Boston University Metropolitan College
Steve Rosenberg, Professor of Mathematics, Boston University
Linda Ruiz-Davenport, Senior Program Director, Elementary Mathematics, Boston Public Schools
Sandra Ryack-Bell, Executive Director, MITS
Robert Sartwell, Director of Science & Health, Malden Public Schools
Farideh Seihoun, President, Collaborative for Teacher Training; Professor, Framingham State College
Eliza Spang, Research Associate, WestEd
Thomas Vaughn, Adjunct Faculty, Science Dept., Middlesex Community College
Adrienne Wootters, Associate Professor & Chair, Department of Physics, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
Deborah Wright, Science Department Coordinator, Winchendon Public Schools
Steve Yurek, Associate Director of the Center for Math Achievement, Lesley University

Council Meeting Dates: January 13, 2009; March 12, 2009; April 27, 2009; and May 14, 2009.

Parent and Community Education and Involvement Advisory Council

I. INTRODUCTION

The Parent and Community Education and Involvement Advisory Council (PCEI) welcomed many new members at the November 3, 2008 All Advisory Council Orientation to begin the 2008-2009 academic year. Throughout the course of this year, the PCEI Advisory Council worked on researching and then developing a draft proposal for statewide standards regarding effective practices for family and community engagement. The council's work culminated on June 23, 2009 at the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) meeting when members of the PCEI Advisory Council presented the context, draft proposal of the standards, and possible action steps that PCEI would like to pursue during the next school year. The purpose of this presentation was to request Board members' feedback on how the PCEI Advisory Council can best proceed in using these proposed draft standards as a starting place for how family and community engagement can help the Department work to close achievement and expectations gaps, as well as further integrate 21st Century Skills into schools.

II. 2008-2009 WORK OF THE COUNCIL

The work done by the PCEI Advisory Council this year is designed to help advance one of the Department's priorities to provide "supports for students and families." The context, draft standards, and work that results in the coming years can help the Department, Board, and schools fulfill the goal of working "in partnership with stakeholders to provide students and families with access to the school and community-based social, health, nutrition, and other supports they need to benefit from educational opportunity."

The council began its work for the year by reviewing and building upon the work completed by previous PCEI Advisory Councils, in particular the Parent, Family, and Community Involvement Guide created by a previous council in partnership with Department staff. From there, the PCEI Advisory Council decided to focus on developing and proposing to the Board clear guidelines or expectations about what is family and community engagement, and what it could look like here in Massachusetts.

From this work and further research, the council developed the following proposed draft standards, which are based on the National PTA's standards for Parental Involvement:

- **Standard 1:** Welcoming All Stakeholders: Schools create and ensure a welcoming culture and environment for all families, children and youth, school staff, and community members. Stakeholders are valued and connected to each other in support of high academic expectations, achievement, and healthy development.
- **Standard 2:** Communicating Effectively: Families and school staff engage in regular, meaningful dialogue about learning, high academic expectations, achievement, and healthy development of students. Schools systematically share information and solicit input about school goals and initiatives with the broader community.

- **Standard 3:** Supporting the Success of Children and Youth: Families, schools, and community focus their collaboration on supporting student learning and healthy development in all settings (including home, school, and community) and provide regular, meaningful opportunities for children and youth to strengthen the knowledge and skills needed to be effective 21st Century citizens.
- **Standard 4:** Valuing Each Child and Youth: Families, schools, and community respect the uniqueness of each child and youth and are empowered to advocate for all students to ensure that they are treated equitably and have access to high quality learning opportunities.
- **Standard 5:** Sharing Power and Responsibility: Families, school staff, and community partners have equal access, voice and value in informing, influencing, and creating policies, practices, and programs affecting children, youth and families.
- **Standard 6:** Partnering with Community: Families and school staff collaborate with community partners to connect students and families to expanded learning opportunities and community services in order to support achievement and civic participation.

One subcommittee of the council began compiling and synthesizing the research and literature around family and community engagement into a briefing paper. The goal is to use the briefing paper to help disseminate and explain the foundation of these proposed standards to relevant stakeholders, such as families, educators, administrators, community representatives, and other interested parties. This brief is in its first draft and is expected to be completed in early September, 2009.

Another subcommittee of the PCEI Advisory Council focused its discussions on possible action steps to move these standards from a proposed draft to statewide educational policy. The diverse strategies suggested were reviewed by the entire council and then finalized as recommendations and presented to the Board on June 23, 2009.

III. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

The PCEI Advisory Council appreciates the feedback received from the Board on June 23, and looks forward to continuing its work in this area.

The following recommendations will be pursued during the 2009-2010 academic year:

- Continue to work on compiling research, data, and literature into a briefing paper;
- Begin sharing the proposed standards with stakeholder groups to gather input and feedback and to promote “buy-in” to these standards. As a part of this, the council would like to share and discuss its work with other interested advisory councils of the Board;
- Develop proposed draft rubrics and indicators for each standard to be used as a tool to help both schools and families understand what these standards look like in “real life,” and
- Find volunteer schools that would “field test” the draft rubrics, so that indicators may be modified for clarity, completeness, and relevance of the standards.

Following this research, development, revision, and testing, the PCEI will seek the Board’s support and endorsement of these standards for statewide implementation.

IV. COUNCIL DETAILS

ESE Administrator: Rachelle Engler Bennett, Director of Student Support

ESE Council Liaison: Eileen Wedegartner, Academic Support Liaison

Chairperson: Margaret O'Hare-Director, Massachusetts Parent and Information and Resource Center (PIRC) at the Federation for Children with Special Needs

Members of the 2008-2009 Advisory Council:

Antonia Blinn, Program Director, Massachusetts Coalition of School-Based Health Centers

Michelle Brooks, Assistant Superintendent for Family and Student Engagement, Boston Public Schools

Karen Bryant, State and Federal Information Services Specialist, Springfield Public Schools

Laurie Carr, Principal, John D. Philbrick Elementary School, Boston Public Schools

Kristine Coffey-Donahue, Parent and Attorney, Law office of Kristine D. Coffey-Donahue

Patricia Gorham, Director of SOAR, Swampscott Public Schools

Kim Hunt, President, Massachusetts PTA

Terrance Ingano, Director of Curriculum/Grant Management K-12, Clinton Public Schools

Barbara Krol-Sinclair, Adjunct Faculty, Granite State College; and Director of Intergenerational Literacy Program, Chelsea and Boston Public Schools

Sonja Lartey, Senior Staff Consultant, Verizon Communication

Karen Mapp, Ed.D., Lecturer on Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education

JoAnne McCormick, Director of Guidance, Dedham Public Schools

Evelyn Nellum, Community Representative, Boston

Stuart Peskin, Teacher, Natick Public Schools

Courtney Rizzo, Grade 6 Teacher, Kennedy Elementary School, Somerville Public Schools

Christopher Sposato, Principal, Pittsfield Public Schools

Kristen Sullivan, Research Analyst, Bentley University

Abby Weiss, Executive Director, Full-Service Schools Roundtable

Pamela Westmoreland, Director of Administration, The Learning Partnership

Council Meeting Dates: December 2, 2008; February 4, 2009; March 5, 2009; March 31, 2009; May 5, 2009; and June 9, 2009

Racial Imbalance Advisory Council

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the 2008-2009 school year the Racial Imbalance Advisory Council (RIAC) has worked toward the goal established to advise the Commissioner and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. We commend Commissioner Chester for clearly making the achievement gap a priority. We strongly believe that this is a critical step in focusing on the development of sound educational policy that will promote high quality schools which support academic excellence for all students in our Commonwealth. Superintendents need to ensure that they and their staff value the academic potential of each student, regardless of race or class. A review of the issue of school integration in light of recent federal court decisions was a major activity. General Counsel Rhoda Schneider met with RIAC at the beginning of the school year to share with the group legal information and terms that are relevant to integration.

RIAC also reviewed and analyzed reports on academic performance of children of color and poor children. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is identified as a high performing state for most students, and data shows that the gaps are narrowing, but wide disparities still exist between Black, Latino and white students with regard to academic achievement. When socioeconomic class, special education status, and English Language Learners status are analyzed and disaggregated we find that the gaps are widening. RIAC has concluded that there are significant challenges within Massachusetts's school districts to decrease racial isolation. This finding is significant in that research has shown that integrated academic settings help all students to achieve at higher levels.

II. 2008-2009 WORK OF THE COUNCIL

The charge given by Commissioner Chester to the advisory councils asked each council to look at formulating recommendations with regard to closing the achievement gap, supporting 21st Century teaching and learning environments, and aligning with the goals established within the Governor's Readiness Project. The council concurs with current efforts echoed by the ESE Board Chair, to "go beyond academic standards and testing to prepare our students for the 21st Century workplace towards developing skills for our globalized society."

The Racial Imbalance Advisory Council focused on several educational initiatives this past year. The group reviewed the issue of decreasing integration and in many cases increasing racial isolation in light of recent federal court decisions. RIAC remains concerned about the various attempts to reverse desegregation rulings in Massachusetts and elsewhere in the country. In Massachusetts, plaintiffs sought to reopen the Comfort case, in which the federal court had upheld the constitutionality of Lynn's voluntary school transfer/student assignment plan. The plaintiffs' motion to reopen the case was denied by the U.S. District Court (Judge Nancy Gertner) in 2008, and the U.S. Court of Appeals (1st Circuit) affirmed that ruling in March 2009. The activity in the Comfort case prompted RIAC to reflect more closely upon how goals of both academic excellence for all students and diverse schools can be realized. Both are critical to 21st Century learning and the globalized society in which we live.

Commissioner Chester's Charge included that councils also make suggestions on relevant aspects of the Board's and Commissioner's Working Goals and Priorities. It is then crucial to establish a plan to decrease racial isolation in the educational spectrum from teachers to ESE staffing.

The group discussed the academic performance of children of color and poor children. Members embrace the philosophy that if teachers maintain high quality educational programming and maintain high standards for academic excellence from all students, the disparities will close and all children will achieve success. To help achieve this goal RIAC stresses that ESE should continue to develop 21st Century schools that hold high expectations for academic excellence from all students; encourage the development of effective schools that support all students and also strive to provide equitable education for all their students; and have staffing that includes teachers of color who may serve as role models for the students.

An important feature of RIAC's continuous research and analysis of data is to gain more fully an understanding of why the gap is growing especially with regard to the subgroups including students of special education and English language learners. Frequently discussions about achievement gaps are expressed only in terms of Black and Latino students being compared to white students or Asian students. When comparison of one racial or ethnic group with another is made, it supports a deficit model. Council members agreed that the highest standard should be used to discuss the ideal for student achievement. It is a strong belief that all students can achieve and that all groups should have the opportunity to reach the highest standard.

As members reviewed the 2007 and 2008 English Language Arts (ELA) Composite Performance Index (CPI) student performance data from ESE, the results support the hypothesis that affluent school districts continue to outperform systems that are largely urban and poor. We, therefore, conclude that to close the achievement gap, it will require specific funding and/or reallocation of current funds to provide additional services to students falling behind. ESE also needs to suggest enrichment programs and provide high quality curriculum and instruction support to children who are behind. Teachers need to be knowledgeable in their content area and be culturally proficient in their instructional techniques to motivate and teach all students more effectively. Teaching staffs must also be held to a high level of accountability.

NCLB states that students should not remain in substandard schools, but often there is no other school to transfer to because of limited spaces. Each child has a civil right to effective quality education and this should be provided within all the Commonwealth's schools. Research shows evidence that schools are becoming more segregated. RIAC is concerned that racial imbalance will become the norm in too many schools. Members have reviewed articles on racial imbalance and apparent inequitable educational and enrollment practices that create high and low performing schools. It has been noted that some charter schools draw students from public schools that may be struggling financially and that charter schools do not necessarily reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the school district. Concurrently, it is a challenge for school districts to maintain integrated, diverse school environments.

RIAC reviewed policies, data, and research that inform members about the academic progress of children of color, poor children, and other marginalized groups. The council also reviewed and discussed research-based articles and Massachusetts data-driven practices that schools have used to achieve academic excellence for all of their students. The data with regard to teachers of color

is concerning to the membership. With teachers of color being only 2 percent to 3 percent of the teachers in schools in Massachusetts compared to the 14-15 percentage of teachers of color nationwide, RIAC calls attention to the fact that a significant percentage of pre-service teachers struggle to pass and secure public school teacher credentials. There needs to be a closer look at pre-service training for teachers.

Articles and reports that have been reviewed and discussed show that there is clear evidence that race still matters in the Commonwealth's schools and school districts throughout the United States. Although there are some who believe that the issues of race, diversity, and equity are no longer an impediment to academic success and social inclusion, there is evidence that full equity for all students has not yet been achieved. RIAC believes that conversations about equity and diversity should be continued.

RIAC held a retreat and discussed terms referring such as desegregation, integration, and cultural proficiency. Members agreed that since "desegregation" has a legal connotation, integration is the current ideal for our schools. When the term integration is used, it will be specific and the appropriate reference will be racial integration in order to stress the focus of the work as a council. Diversity is also a term which is used with various meanings. RIAC members agreed that the terms "racial integration" and "racial/ethnic diversity" should be used in all reports of the council.

There is a definite need for support of students and families, especially those of subgroups such as African Americans, English Language Learners, and special needs students. Parents of children of these subgroups should be part of the school's or district's parent group so information about health, nutrition and other important aspects of school culture will be clearly known and understood. Funding for Parent Liaisons has been cut in many districts.

RIAC supports the Governor's Readiness Program, recognizing that careful implementation and adequate funding will be necessary to ensure equity.

III. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

Responding to Commissioner Chester's Charge to all advisory councils to focus on the achievement gap, the Governor's Readiness Project, and 21st Century Learning Goals, RIAC provides the following recommendations:

Closing the achievement gap

- Develop policies that support the highest standard for academic achievement;
- Develop universal full day rigorous early education programs;
- Include culturally responsive and culturally relevant styles of instruction and pedagogy in professional development for and within all school districts;
- Review cross-cultural competency and cross-cultural proficiency within all levels of ESE's structure and staffing;
- Reinstate and expand Chapter 636 funding which focused on student achievement; AND
- Create opportunities for people of color to participate in discussions, conferences, and policy-making on issues of race.

Policy

- Develop staffing guidelines for ESE and school districts (all units engaged in public education) that staff composition will more closely reflect the demographics of the Commonwealth. High-need local educational agencies may develop additional staffing policies reflective of the diversity of their student demographics;
- Increase financial and/or career ladder incentives to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers of color for schools with high numbers of students of color and low-income students, and also to review and address current diversity of staffing within ESE;
- Reallocate resources to high-need schools so that in fulfilling the laudable aims of both the Readiness Project and the 21st Century Learning Goals, a greater achievement gap does not become the unintended consequence for poorer districts with high numbers of students of color;
- Increase efforts to diversify the staffing of ESE-related committees in charge of the implementation of programs; and
- Encourage public schools to have mandates to achieve racial diversity within school populations. Currently, charter schools are exempt.

Educator Development and Professionalization

- Include cross-cultural competency and cross-cultural proficiency measurable outcomes connected to educator and administrator initial and professional licensure, as well as recertification processes;
- Create training that will result in culturally responsive and culturally relevant instruction and pedagogy within school districts;
- Support training for educators on effective communication with family, parents and guardians particularly those of children of color, special needs and English language learners; and
- Review and address whether ESE currently operates and supports cross-cultural competency and cross-cultural proficiency within all levels of its organization, structure, and staffing.

Further Research Needed

- The scarcity of teachers of color in the Commonwealth as well as the high failure rates of candidates of color on MTEL, demand a closer scrutiny of how higher education addresses skill building and mastery for this population;
- Analysis of whether the relative success of charter schools is related to their exemption from the mandate for racial balance, and/or retain selected populations;
- Greater clarity in data reporting by ESE, particularly to clearly identify percentages of staff of color in school districts engaged in classroom or individual student instruction and counseling, supervision of teacher performance, and school administration; and
- Research and analyze how current ESE policies help or hinder schools to close the racial achievement gap.

- It appears that data for socio-economic, race, language, and gender diversity need to be disaggregated and closely examined so that interventions can be implemented to rectify hidden undesirable trends.

IV. COUNCIL DETAILS

ESE Administrator: Susan Wheltle, Director of the Office of Curriculum Standards

ESE Council Liaison: Lurline Muñoz-Bennett, Arts Education and Equity Coordinator

Chairperson(s):

Mrs. Gwendolyn Blackburn, formerly Medford Public School Administrator

Brian Rachmaciej, Adj. Coun. Milton Bradley Elementary School, Springfield, June resignation

Members of the 2008-2009 Advisory Council:

Jorgelina Abbate Vaughn, Assistant Professor Curriculum Instruction, UMASS Boston

Rachel Bowen, Human Resources, Assistant Director, Amherst Pelham Regional School District

Phynita Brinson, METCO Director, Wakefield Public Schools

Jacqueline Dix-Smith, METCO Program Director of Braintree Public Schools

Barbara Fields, Representative of Black Educators' Alliance of Massachusetts

Mary Ann Hardenbergh, Chair, Citizens for Public Schools

Nealon Jaynes-Lewis, Administrator, NCLB & McKinney-Vento, Springfield Public Schools

Kalise Daria Jacobs, METCO Director, Wellesley Public Schools

Catherine McCarthy, Educate Online, an SES Provider

Dr. Kahris White McLaughlin, Affirmative Action Officer, Cambridge Public Schools

Dr. Denise Messina, Director of Pupil Services, Monson Public Schools

Gladys Pack, Magnet Schools Evaluator, Ipswich

Linda Wilson, Principal, Homer Street School, Springfield Public Schools

Council Meeting Dates: November 3, 2008; February 26, 2009; March 10, 2009; April 14, 2009; May 19, 2009 and June 16, 2009

School and District Accountability and Assistance Advisory Council

I. INTRODUCTION

The School and District Accountability and Assistant Advisory Council (AAAC) has met seven times and has reported to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education two times since November 2008. The AAAC has reviewed and advised the work plan for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (ESE's) redesign of the accountability and assistance program. ESE Centers for Accountability and Targeted Assistance have engaged with the AAAC on all topics required by legislation and have been responsive to the comments and suggestions of the Council. Guidelines of the Readiness Subcommittee on accountability are also reflected in ESE's work.

Good work has been done and ESE Centers are ready to move to implementation of the redesigned Framework for District Accountability and Assistance. The transition has gone forward as required by legislation and is on track to maintain the type of accountability provided formerly by EQA while improving the connection to assistance. Resources permitting, the completion of District Standards and some audit protocols by the end of this fiscal year prepares ESE and the Board to meet statutory requirements for FY10 district audits. Fifteen (15) reviews of school districts to meet FY09 statutory requirements were completed.

II. 2008-2009 WORK OF THE COUNCIL

The AAAC has advised both the Commissioner and Board as the Commonwealth's School and District Accountability system undergoes comprehensive redesign. We focused our attention on the concepts underlying a coordinated framework for accountability and assistance, standards and criteria for entry and exit from various accountability designations, integration of the systems for school and district accountability, and development of a growth model for analyzing MCAS results.

In our seven meetings, we have undertaken the following work:

- Reviewed the Framework for District Accountability and Assistance and the Comprehensive Annual District Trend Profile (now described as the District Data Review);
- Reviewed the Work Plan for ESE and aligned AAAC agendas for the remainder of FY09 accordingly;
- Reviewed survey to the field on accountability and assistance;
- Held a preliminary discussion of ESE MCAS Growth Measures;
- Reviewed the Integrated Standards for Accountability and Assistance district reviews;
- Reviewed the Essential Conditions which guide the actions taken by both districts and ESE at all levels of the accountability and assistance system; and
- Reviewed plans for School Intervention at Levels 4 & 5 of the Accountability and Assistance Framework.

III. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these discussions, the council concluded the following:

- The Framework for District Accountability and Assistance is ready for next operational steps (statutory language, incorporation of self-assessment process, cutoffs for transition between levels, and requirements for intervention). There is enough flexibility and clarity in the Framework to apply accountability standards and assistance up to and including prescriptive interventions;
- The District Standards reflect integration of EQA standards, Essential Conditions and other sources so that districts can focus on the most important indicators. The primary standards and prioritized indicators align with best practices and set the stage for further integration with national compliance requirements and other assessment processes. The revised standards and indicators should be vetted with districts to secure widespread support before district reviews begin in FY10; and
- The AAAC is concerned about the adequacy of resources and the capacity available to meet statutory requirements of 40 school district reviews in FY10 and to provide targeted assistance to all districts requiring intervention.

IV. COUNCIL DETAILS

ESE Administrator: Karla Brooks Baehr, Deputy Commissioner

ESE Council Liaison: Jesse Dixon, Special Assistant to Karla Brooks Baehr

Chairperson: Joseph Esposito, Retired CFO, Former EMANC Board Member

Members of the 2008-2009 Advisory Council:

Mr. Andrew Churchill, Assistant Director, Center for Education Policy, UMass Amherst

Mr. Robert Consalvo, Founder/Trustee, Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter School

Ms. Deborah Dancy, Principal, Channing School, Boston Public Schools

Ms. Judy DeLucia, Superintendent, Greater Lawrence Technical School

Mr. Anders Lewis, Teacher, Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School

Mr. Sam Liao, School Committee Member, Sharon Public Schools

Ms. Anne McKenzie, Executive Director, Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative

Ms. Beverly Miyares, Professional Development Specialist, MTA

Ms. Linda Noonan, Executive Director, Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education

Ms. Laura Perille, Executive Director, EdVestors, BPS Parent

Mr. John Portz, Chair, Political Science Department, Northeastern University

Mr. Patrick Schettini, Superintendent, Reading Public Schools; Attorney

Mr. Steven Sharek, Coordinator, Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational School

Ms. Susan Therriault, Research Analyst, American Institutes for Research

Council Meeting Dates: November 3rd, 2008; December 1st, 2008; February 11th, 2009; March 11th, 2009; April 8th, 2009; May 13th, 2009 and June 10th, 2009.

Special Education Advisory Council

I. INTRODUCTION

The Special Education Advisory Council (SAC) has had an active and productive year. The SAC focused its discussion this year on a wide variety of issues critical to special education. Recommendations focus on the Massachusetts State Performance Plan and on partnership and dissemination activities.

The existence, mission, and composition of the Special Education State Advisory Council are regulated by federal law and to some extent by the Massachusetts Education Reform Act.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA 04) requires that the Special Education SAC serve to:

- Advise the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on unmet needs within the State in the education of children with disabilities;
- Comment publicly on proposed rules and regulations involving special education;
- Advise the ESE in developing evaluations and corrective action plans; and
- Assist in the coordination of services to children with disabilities.

IDEA 04 requires that a majority of members on the SAC be individuals with disabilities or parents of individuals with disabilities. Additionally, the membership must include:

- Representatives of elementary, secondary, and post secondary schools and programs; and
- Representatives from state agencies involved in child serving activities.

Names, affiliations, and contact information for our membership is provided at the end of this report.

The Special Education SAC met seven times during 2008-2009. Additionally, members of the SAC participated in the State Special Education Steering Committee Meeting in December 2008. This meeting was held by the Department's Special Education Planning and Policy Development Office for the purpose of obtaining feedback from a variety of stakeholders on the review, development and setting of performance targets for the 20 State Performance Plan indicators now required under IDEA 04.

We have maintained ongoing efforts to advise the Board and the Department concerning unmet needs in the education of students with disabilities who reside in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We have also continued to encourage representation of statewide interests and concerns at SAC meetings by ensuring diversity in membership, holding our meetings in a central location, and disseminating our meeting schedule to facilitate public participation.

We would like to thank Marcia Mittnacht, Massachusetts State Director of Special Education, Madeline Levine, Assistant Director of Special Education, and Shawn Connelly, the Department SAC liaison, for their active participation in our meetings as well as their work to support activities between meetings.

II. 2008-2009 WORK OF THE COUNCIL

Advisory Council Actions

The following are considered important current issues related to the area of special education and were selected by the SAC membership for discussion because of their impact on the achievement gap and the expectation gap in Massachusetts. Each topic had a direct relationship to the Governor's Final Readiness Report recommendations related to: 1) meeting the learning needs of individual students in order to exceed Massachusetts' high expectations and rigorous academic standards; and/or 2) ensuring that every student is taught by highly competent, well-educated, strongly supported, and effective educators.

The Annual Review of the State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR)

Under IDEA 04, states submitted a six-year State Performance Plan (SPP) in December 2005. Each year, each state submits an Annual Performance Report (APR) that details the state's progress on the 20 indicator areas of the SPP. The SAC discussed each of the 20 indicator areas and provided feedback to the Department on issues related to changes in indicator descriptor, revisions to targets, the use of stakeholder input, public reporting, slippage and progress on specific indicators, and specific challenges related to certain indicators. The SAC will continue to monitor progress and data generated for all indicators in the SPP. The SPP and APR can be accessed at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/>.

Council members participated in ESE SPP interest groups

- Indicator 15: Discussed the state's plan to correct special education noncompliance in a timely manner;
- Indicator 12: Discussed the state's plan to correct noncompliance, improve practice and data collection; and
- Indicator 4: Discussed ESE's plan to create a standard definition of suspension in order to improve data collection and interpretation.

DESE review of the Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA)

- Council members participated in ESE Consultant Zerkel's focus groups.
- Council formed a sub-committee which drafted recommendations sent to the Commissioner on April 1, 2009.

Prompting Ethical Behavior by All Individuals Involved in the Education of Students with Special Needs

- A sub-committee of SAC members was formed on the topic of *Prompting Ethical Behavior by All Individuals Involved in the Education of Students with Special Needs*. This committee met regularly and created a white paper (see attachment). This paper entitled "Applying the Child-First Ethic When Serving Students with Disabilities in Educational Settings" is a conceptual white paper with exercises for use in professional development and in reflective teaching.

Response to Intervention (RTI)

- The SAC engaged in a discussion regarding Response to Intervention (RTI) and its value for all children in both general and special education. As a general education initiative, when done well, RTI integrates evidence-based practice, progress monitoring, and

differentiated instruction. This will benefit all children and potentially lower the number of students in special education.

III. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations from the SAC address the Governor's Final Readiness Report goals related to: 1) meeting the learning needs of individual students in order to exceed Massachusetts' high expectations and rigorous academic standards; and/or 2) ensuring that every student is taught by highly competent, well educated, strongly supported, and effective educators.

We strongly encourage ESE to create an assertive and bold action regarding the statewide general education implementation of RTI in Massachusetts. Clarify and educate the school community that RTI is a general education initiative. Such an action should include a thoughtful plan regarding accountability through data collection including but not limited to assessments.

- The SAC recommends that a representative of the general education join the SAC in order to broaden and deepen discussion; and
- We recommend the white paper entitled "Applying the Child-First Ethic When Serving Students with Disabilities in Educational Settings" (see attached), created by the SAC, be posted on the ESE website and a ESE advisory of its availability be sent to both general and special education personnel.

State Performance Plan

- The SAC recommends that the Department continue working to create a statewide definition for suspension so that accurate reporting can be submitted;
- Indicator 15: The SAC recommends that the Department continue to improve upon working to meet the target set for Indicator 15, Identification and Correction of Noncompliance;
- The SAC recommends that ESE consider data collected via the SPP indicators and examine how this data can improve outcomes and policy; and
- It is recommended that ESE consider creating a virtual statewide information sharing platform regarding strategies and resources in special education.

IV. COUNCIL DETAILS

ESE Administrator: Marcia Mitnacht, State Director of Special Education

ESE Council Liaison: Shawn Connelly, Education Specialist

Chairperson: Robin Foley, Parent Representative

Vice-Chair: Patricia Schram, Parent and Medical Community Representative

Members of the 2008-2009 Advisory Council:

Louis Abbate, Private School Representative

James Aprea, Massachusetts Office on Disability

Jane Buckley, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

Alexandra Buckmire, Charter School Administrator

Patricia Cameron, Department of Early Education and Care

Peter Cirioni, Office for Homeless Education

Jennie DunKley, Parent Representative

Alison Fraser, Parent Representative
Stephen Gannon, Massachusetts Urban Special Ed. Administrators
Aime Ashley Hane, Parent Representative, Assistant Professor
Gail Havelick, MA Department of Public Health
Carla Jentz, Executive Director, Massachusetts Administrators for Special Education
Tracy Johnston, Parent Representative
Christine Kenney, Department of Youth Services
Fred Knowles, Department of Mental Health
Mary Murray, Department of Youth Services, Alternate
Therese Murphy-Miller, Department of Developmental Services
Alec Peck, Boston College
Susan Stelk, Department of Social Services

Council Meeting Dates:

The Special Education SAC met seven times during 2008-2009. Additionally, members of the SAC participated in the State Special Education Steering Committee Meeting in December 2008. This meeting was held by the Department's Special Education Planning and Policy Development Office for the purpose of obtaining feedback from a variety of stakeholders on the review, development and setting of performance targets for the 20 State Performance Plan indicators now required under IDEA 04.

September 9, 2008; October 14, 2008; November 3, 2008; February 10, 2009; April 14, 2009; May 12, 2009; and June 9, 2009

Appendix

Applying the Child-First Ethic When Serving Students with Disabilities in Educational Settings

June, 2009

Introduction

A range of stakeholders make up the Massachusetts Special Education State Advisory Committee (SAC)¹, which is mandated by federal law. The SAC promotes open and frank discussion concerning statewide special education matters and advises the State Director of Special Education and the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

During the course of several SAC group discussions during AY 2007-08, concerns relative to ethical behavior in special education emerged as an area in need of further exploration. Based upon anecdotal information, Program Quality Assurance (PQA) data, and parental perspectives, it appeared that standards of child-first ethical behavior were being compromised in some special education situations.

One responsibility of the SAC is to inform the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education about conditions that effect special education service delivery. Consequently, a SAC subcommittee² met for approximately 2 years to deliberate the aforementioned ethical considerations, and to prepare this document (subsequently approved by the entire SAC) for the Massachusetts special education community. It is hoped that this work will improve awareness of ethical responsibilities in the professional practice of individuals and LEAs, in order to improve services to students with disabilities.

Members of the SAC recognize that there is an important distinction between “ethical behaviors” and “logistical issues” that can impact service provision. This distinction will be discussed in greater detail in the following section of this document, but it should be noted here that the intent of this paper is to encourage “child-first” ethical behavior on the part of those who serve students with disabilities. Other factors which may impact the provision of services, such as unfunded mandates, poor funding mechanisms, and insufficient infrastructure to share best practices are not discussed. However, the SAC recognizes that these conditions exist, and that they must be considered in the larger discussion regarding conditions that impact services for students with disabilities. This document should serve as a teaching and discussion tool to enhance outcomes for students with disabilities in connection with the Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) standard of services.

The intent of this paper is not to judge or bring attention to any one specific person, LEA, or private program, nor to prompt a compliance inquiry for any of the above. This paper is meant solely as an educational tool to support all individuals involved in decision making and supporting students with disabilities. It fulfills an “advisory” responsibility by members of the Massachusetts Special Education Advisory Council.

¹ Membership includes parents, special education administrators, advocates, higher education representatives, and personnel from numerous state agencies affiliated with special education services.

² Subcommittee members were Alec Peck (Chair), Carla Jentz, Jennie Dunkley, and Louis Abbate.

Child-First Ethic

Members of the SAC subscribe to the ethical premise that, in keeping with the concept of FAPE, the needs of each child should always be the primary consideration whenever special education service issues are considered. This is an important ethical stance. It means that special educators recognize the right of every child on an IEP to be educated in a manner that is most likely to assist that child to meet the same standards as non-disabled peers, to have equal access to the curriculum and to the life of the school, and to be treated with equal respect.

Logistics Versus Ethics

No one can control or establish contingencies for all unexpected challenges. Hence, for the purposes of this discussion, we differentiate between issues of “logistics” and “ethics.”

Logistical issues are challenges that should typically be responded to effectively and expediently. These include on-site complications that deter immediate compliance with special education requirements, such as sudden and unexpected teacher resignations. Logistical challenges can result in temporary delays in supports, services or compliance, although these are not to be condoned. They are confounding variables which need separate remedial attention.

Ethical issues are actions, responses, or a lack of responses that are grounded in practice that would be commonly viewed as either ethical or unethical. Ethical behavior requires adherence to laws and regulations, and ethical behavior complies with fundamental moral principles, many of which have been codified by nationally recognized professional groups.³ In special education, the child-first ethic should drive decision making.

Unethical behavior can be intentional or unintentional. It can be performed by individual(s) or it can be systemic and cultural. We recognize that numerous factors may motivate unethical behavior, and that tacit rationalizations for these behaviors may include misinformation, lack of experience or lack of specialized personnel, overburdened personnel, insufficient resources, efficiency and expediency. Of course, as unethical behaviors, none of these are justifiable and none are acceptable. The failure to correct a logistical problem is itself, unethical.

The recognition of local unethical behavior may signify a need for a shift in style, practice, process and/or culture within an LEA. An intent of this paper is to engender discussion of unethical practices and processes that may have inadvertently become commonplace in local practice.

Recommendations for Use of this Document

The authors recognize that there is no “moral calculus for solving ethical dilemmas...” where all that is needed is a “...right formula, and all of our problems can be resolved.”⁴ Ethical practice is based in moral values, and there are unique features in the moral development of each of us.

³ Professional groups include the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA) and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)

⁴ Fasching, D, (1997). Beyond values: Story, character, and public policy in American schools. In J, Paul et, al., *Ethics and decision making in local schools: Inclusion, policy and reform*. Baltimore: Paul Brookes.

Nevertheless, special educators do seem to share some common values, and we seem to recognize "...an ethical imperative... that we must both do well and do well well."⁵

The purpose of this document to raise awareness of situations which may place practitioners in ethical dilemmas. It also reminds practitioners of their responsibility to always act in a manner consistent with the best interests of the individual students in their.

There are at least three ways in which this document can be used: self-reflection, group-reflection, and as a theme for workshops.

- Self-reflection: Many of the following examples highlight situations in which individuals must make ethical choices. Working privately, individuals can reflect on these examples and compare them to their own practice. If one holds competing values (e.g., conflicts over time spent outside a normalizing classroom for important therapy), reflecting on these cases may stimulate conversations that could help resolve or at least diminish such conflict.
- Group reflection: Small groups may want to consider the example situations in this document and compare them to situations which have occurred in their own building. This may highlight differences in moral perspectives on practice and increase respect for the child-first ethic, for other professionals, and for the diverse students who are served.
- Workshops: Since ethical dilemmas are sometimes difficult to recognize, workshops or in-service meetings can be used to highlight the moral dimensions of decisions and to discuss ethical practice.

We sincerely hope that this document will at least stimulate important conversations among the various professionals who serve students with special needs. We agree with Berkeley and Ludlow (2008) who succinctly stated:

"To us, ethics, given the ideals and the vast range of values we cherish and try to understand and use in our daily lives, should be part of a lifelong self-examination and re-examination or reflection, as well as part of a regular effort of continuing conversation and training in our professional lives."

Cases for Your Consideration: The following situations present logistical and/or ethical issues which need to be considered. We analyze the first three cases as examples of the process of child-first ethical reasoning. We then present additional cases for use by individuals and/or LEAs in local discussions:

- George: An IEP has been prepared for George, a sophomore at the XYZ high school who is in a full inclusion program. The IEP calls for a number of accommodations in testing and instruction. The team chair has placed a copy of the IEP in the mailbox of each of George's teachers. At the annual review, the team discovers that many of the accommodations have not been implemented. Where may the child-first ethic have been compromised?

⁵ Berkeley, T. & Ludlow, B. (2008) Ethical dilemmas in rural special education: a call for conversation about the ethics of practice. *Rural Special Education Quarterly* 27(1/2), 3-9.

There are several issues here: First, the special education teacher did not explain the IEP to the general ed teachers. From a logistical perspective, this may have been due to an excessive caseload. This would not excuse the special ed teacher from having explained the IEP, but it may mean that the district has been unrealistic in its expectations for caseloads. On the other hand, this could be an ethical issue. The special educator may have ignored the need for explanations due to interpersonal or “turf” conflicts with the general ed teachers.

Second, the classroom teachers apparently failed to read the IEP and ask appropriate questions, or just ignored the IEP, or took the position “the same rules apply to all students in my class.” Logistically, this could reflect a lack of training for teachers within the district. Ethically, it could mean that some teachers deliberately ignored their legal and ethical requirement to comply with the IEP.

Third, there was a failure by special ed staff to monitor the IEP other than on an annual basis. Unrealistically high case loads may have logistically prevented the staff from regular monitoring, but a personal decision to “...not interfere with the classroom teachers’ practices” would be unethical behavior on the part of the special educator.

Finally, there may be a school culture which discourages or inhibits cooperation between special and general ed staff. Logistically, this reflects a lack of leadership that would set directions for all teachers.

- Boris: The XYZ district has a discipline policy which allows principals to remove students from classes and place them in their office for the remainder of a day. Boris is a student who has been sent to the Principal’s office for inappropriate in-class behaviors for more than ½ day each time, for 8 days in the past month. His IEP identifies him as having emotional and behavioral disorders. Ethically, are these in-house suspensions OK? Can the district defend this policy? What are the child-first considerations?

First, was Boris just sitting in the principal’s office, not receiving any instruction from a qualified teacher? Given the frequency of his in-house suspensions, this would violate his right to FAPE in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

Secondly, it appears that a behavior plan addressing his “inappropriate in-class behaviors” has either not been written, is inadequate to meet his needs, or is not being appropriately implemented. Lack of attention to a behavior plan for this student who is identified as having an emotional/behavioral disorder fails to provide FAPE in the LRE.

Also, the district policy may need to be examined for compliance with Commonwealth regulations on suspension and expulsion.

- Bella: Five days before the end of a school year, the team chair receives an outside evaluation of Bella, a 3rd grader on an IEP based on visual impairment. The evaluation report identifies a previously undiagnosed moderate to severe hearing loss. Given this new information, the parents have requested that the child’s proposed 4th grade program be re-evaluated. Because it is the end of the academic year, the team chair decides to place the folder aside and address it in September. What are the child-first issues to be considered?

The severity of this low incidence case is important to consider. It will require additional team members with knowledge of hearing loss. It may require changes to the acoustic properties of the classroom and acquisition of equipment.

There are logistical considerations in this case, including the fact that gathering teams near the end of a school year is very difficult. Introducing new members to a team at this point in time is also awkward. Nevertheless, this diagnosis may imply a need for a very different classroom environment at the start of the next academic year.

Ethically, scheduling the meeting in September is not the problem, but not scheduling until the new academic year with no further consideration before then is problematic. Consents for evaluation, a classroom environmental assessment, a need to purchase other equipment, and reconsideration of the existing IEP should all take place either in the remaining time this year or over the summer. Waiting until September to begin addressing these issues may mean that needed program changes would be postponed for months.

Additional Cases: The following cases are presented for consideration by individuals in LEAs faced with similar dilemmas. While there is rarely a single solution to an ethical or logistical problem, it is hoped that the resolutions suggested in the previous cases will provide guidance to the resolution of the following cases.

- **Tony:** Tony is an 11th grader who has motor problems that prevent him from taking adequate notes in class. His 504 accommodation plan includes access to a computer in all academic classes. The technology budget for the district has been exhausted and the new budget does not have money for new computers. Tony's History teacher does not have a computer in his classroom, and decides that he will simply assign a classmate to provide "buddy notes." What are the logistical issues and what are the ethical issues in this case?
- **Rochelle:** Rochelle is a 7th grader in the XYZ middle school. Her IEP was developed during the past year. The district policy is to keep IEPs under lock and key in the main office, for "privacy reasons." As a result, only one of Rochelle's teachers has ever seen the IEP. Others have been told to accommodate Rochelle by giving her additional time on tests and to accept fewer homework problems (e.g., 5 out of 10 math problems). What are the logistical issues and what are the ethical issues in this case?
- **Patrick:** Patrick is a 4th grade student with motor dyspraxia that precludes the use of spoken language. His expressive language is exclusively through sign language. Previously, he was in another state where he was in a total communication program. The parents now request an out-of-district placement or placement in a collaborative program that uses a total communication approach. Citing LRE requirements, the team argues that an inclusion program could be accomplished if an interpreter were present. What are the logistical issues and what are the ethical issues in this case?
- **Margarita:** Margarita is a 2 year 11 month old diagnosed with PDD-NOS. She has been receiving a total of 15 hours per week in combined home-based services, for six months. The XYZ school district has proposed a half-day pre-school program to provide ABA, Speech & Language, and Occupational Therapy services. Margarita's father has declined

services and informed the district that his daughter is too young to go to school and will be staying at home with her siblings and mother. What are the logistical issues and what are the ethical issues in this case?

- Maria: Maria is a 9th grade student at XYZ High School, who is visually impaired. Since her family moved into the XYZ school district a year ago, Maria has received the services of a teacher of the visually impaired, an orientation and mobility specialist, and a braille aide. Maria has now attended three schools in two years. Shortly after moving to the XYZ school district, Maria's family was evicted from their apartment.

After the eviction, Maria and her family moved in with her grandmother who lives in ABCville, some 25 miles away from the XYZ school district. The ABCville School district informed Maria's mother that because the family was homeless, Maria could continue to attend the XYZ Schools. What are the child-first ethical issues in this case?

Technology/Engineering Advisory Council

I. INTRODUCTION

The teaching of Technology/Engineering is the teaching of 21st Century Skills. Connections between standards, instruction, and 21st Century Skills are clearly embedded in our curriculum and are standard practices used by our technology/engineering teachers. Open-ended, collaborative projects in technology and engineering, where students critically analyze an open-ended problem, and design, build and perfect a solution exemplifies the teaching of 21st Century Skills. Such project-based learning provides Massachusetts students the opportunity to experience real-life problem solving while improving and making more meaningful their learning in science and mathematics.

For our students to be successful in tackling the challenges that will face them in the 21st Century, it is essential that they understand how to interact with and improve the designed world. In recent years, the study of Technology/Engineering has evolved to include such diverse areas as robotics, renewable energy, and DNA technology, which are becoming major parts of the Massachusetts economy. Nevertheless, the problem-solving principles on which these advances are built upon remain fundamentals in our state standards and district curricula.

It is the open-ended design challenges of technology/engineering courses, where students work in teams to analyze the nature of the problem, and use technology to research, design, build, test, and improve a solution, which perhaps best exemplifies the teaching of 21st Century Skills, while strengthening and making meaningful knowledge learned in other classes.

II. 2008-2009 WORK OF THE COUNCIL

This year the Technology/Engineering Advisory Council worked to articulate recommendations that build upon the close relationship of technology/engineering and 21st Century Skills.

III. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations to strengthen the teaching of technology, engineering and their interconnection with science, mathematics, and social studies throughout the state of Massachusetts include:

Teacher Preparation

- Educator preparation programs should contain as part of their general education requirements for all grade and subject areas a content-driven course sequence containing science and engineering components. In this three-course sequence the focus should be teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking skills and hands-on learning. These courses should be based on the Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering standards and include experiences in project-based learning that incorporates designing, building, testing, analysis and redesign; and
- The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) should establish a program that actively recruits, supports and provides mentorship for mid-career

professionals from industry interested in teaching technology/engineering. These new teachers should be coached by highly qualified master teachers.

Standards

- The Commissioner and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education should recommend the acceptance of Technology/Engineering as a laboratory science by the Board of Higher Education for the purpose of admission to state colleges and universities.

Demonstration Vehicles

- ESE, in partnership with professional organizations, should create and maintain a 21st Century Skills website where educators can find resources including standards-based projects, teacher-created activities, teacher-reviewed curricula, professional development resources, grants and links to professional organizations;
- Community organizations that contribute to the support of partnerships between schools, local industries and higher education that encourage the application of 21st Century Skills should be recognized and rewarded;
- Throughout grades 5-12, Technology/Engineering and the engineering design process need to be integrated more thoroughly into the teaching of mathematics, science, social studies, and other areas in curricula designed to teach the 21st Century Skills; and
- ESE should host an annual statewide conference to showcase year-long capstone projects completed by 11-12th grade students. These projects, archived on the website described above, would serve as the demonstration vehicles for 21st Century Skills.

The 2001 revision of the Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Frameworks added technology/engineering as a core academic strand. This action strengthened the academic rigor of technology/engineering programs statewide.

Technology/Engineering, which creates the very fabric of our society, is a significant part of what defines us as human beings. Having an understanding of how things are designed, how they are constructed, how they work, and how they impact society, is essential for our students to be successful in the 21st Century.

IV. COUNCIL DETAILS

ESE Administrator: Barbara Libby, Office of Math, Science, Technology and Engineering

ESE Council Liaison: Jacob Foster, Office of Math, Science, Technology and Engineering

Chairperson: Jim Alicata, Chair, Industrial Technology Department, Fitchburg State College

Members of the 2008-2009 Advisory Council:

John Boudreau, Computer Technology/Literacy Teacher, Fall River Public Schools

Diane Brancazio, HS & MS Teacher, Belmont Public Schools

Joseph Buckley Jr., Science & Technology Curriculum Liaison, Worcester Public Schools

Johanna Bunn, Teacher Educator, Museum of Science

Jonathan Dietz, Middle School Teacher, Weston Public Schools

Bradford George, Technology Middle School Teacher, Stow Public Schools

Mark Kobel, Technology/Engineering High School Teacher, Gardner Public Schools

Douglas Prime, Executive Director, Future Engineers Center, University of Massachusetts, Lowell

Susan Sanford, Technology/Engineering Teacher, Worcester Public Schools
Yvonne Spicer, Associate Director, National Center for Technological Literacy

Council Meeting Dates: December 11, 2008; January 22, 2009; March 12, 2009; and May 21, 2009.

Vocational Technical Advisory Council

I. INTRODUCTION

The Vocational Technical Education Advisory Council (VTE) is a new council that represents the interests of over 43,000 students in 700-plus M.G.L. Chapter 74-approved vocational technical education (VTE) programs in 70 school districts. Council members were appointed by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in October 2008 and attended an orientation meeting with Board Chair Maura Banta and Commissioner Mitchell Chester on November 3, 2008. The council met four times during the 2008-09 school year and identified the need to enhance linkages between secondary-level vocational technical education and postsecondary education in community colleges and registered apprenticeship programs as its primary focus topic for the 2008-09 school year. The council is looking forward to prioritizing and working on additional issues in future years, as identified in this report.

In Massachusetts, vocational technical education (VTE), which includes agricultural education, has a one hundred year history of serving the needs of students through a relevant, meaningful, and rigorous career focused approach that adapts to and evolves with the needs of the local, state, national, and global economies. The unique strength of this educational model continues to be business/industry/registered apprenticeship partnerships that exist for every VTE program through Program Advisory Committees. The VTE community is grateful for the support it receives from Program Advisory Committee members concerning curriculum relevance, emerging trends in industry, prioritization of capital equipment needs, scholarships, donations, and cooperative education/career placement opportunities for students. This is a model that truly is designed to ensure that students are prepared with the skills necessary for success in the 21st Century.

The Pioneer Institute, a non-partisan public policy research organization, released a White Paper in October of 2008 titled “Vocational-Technical Education in Massachusetts” (located at <http://www/Iopmpeeromstotite/prg/pdf/wdf/wp42.pdf>) that made the following conclusion: “There are tremendous lessons to be learned from vocational-technical education in Massachusetts. The achievements and contributions of these schools set examples that should be studied as some of the most successful models of high school design.”

In addition, the following data was also highlighted with regards to the performance of regional vocational technical schools:

- A dropout rate 2 percent lower than the state average - 1.8 percent vs. 3.8 percent;
- A graduation rate almost 10 percent higher than the state average - 90.5 percent vs. 80.9 percent;
- A SPED graduation rate almost 20 percent higher than the state average – 82 percent vs. 62.8 percent;
- MCAS passing rate 2 percent higher than the state average – 96 percent vs. 94 percent; and

- An achievement gap decrease of 27 percent between vocational and comprehensive high schools in six years – current combined CPI average of 81.7 vs. state average of 86.5 points.

The White Paper presents significant data that could be used to make a very compelling case that the 29 regional vocational technical and agricultural schools are currently functioning as highly effective and efficient “Readiness Schools.” It is also significant to note that the White Paper cites the autonomy of these schools as a major factor in facilitating these rapid and measurable improvements.

It is important to note that the VTE community has always recognized the primary importance of providing students with occupational safety and health training that is valued by employers. Toward that end, the VTE community has entered into several formal and informal partnerships with the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), MA Division of Occupational Safety (DOS), and MA Department of Public Health (DPH) for the common purpose of promoting and facilitating workplace safety and health initiatives, as well as the sharing of valuable resources. As a result of these efforts, the vast majority of VTE students graduate with an OSHA 10-hour credential and over 25 percent of VTE teachers have been authorized as OSHA trainers. In addition, VTE shops and labs are regularly inspected by experts for OSHA compliance, and health and safety workshops are regularly made available to teachers on a wide variety of important topics.

It is also important to note that students in vocational technical and agricultural schools benefit immensely from participation in a wide range of co-curricular vocational technical student organizations on the local, state, and national levels such as SkillsUSA, FFA-An Organization for Students Studying Agriculture, Business Professionals of America (BPA), and Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA). Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) will be launched in 2009-10 in cooperation with the UMass Medical School and the MA Area Health Education Center (AHEC) network.

II. WORK OF THE COUNCIL

Postsecondary Linkages: The need exists to extend, expand, and streamline linkages between secondary-level VTE and postsecondary-level community college education. A seamless transition is needed that eliminates the duplication of coursework and removes unnecessary barriers to student success at the postsecondary level. The council met with Secretary of Education, Paul Reville, in April to discuss this important issue and its alignment with the goals of the Governor’s Readiness Project.

Equal Educational Opportunity Access to VTE: The need exists to improve the cooperation of sending schools in providing prospective students and parents/guardians with timely, accurate, and appropriate information on their option to access vocational technical education. Commissioner Mitchell Chester issued an official communication that served to improve the situation and the council is most appreciative. Indeed, the efforts of the ESE Office for Career/Vocational Technical Education in providing trainings to middle school counselors and others is also appreciated as is the commitment to providing continued support in the future. It is also important that the VTE community remain committed and focused on improving opportunities for students choosing to pursue nontraditional by gender career pathways with a

goal of providing all students with learning environments that are gender neutral.

- **VTE Frameworks:** The 43 VTE Frameworks were developed with the expectation that they would be revisited and regularly revised, updated, and validated by business/industry. Specifically, revisions need to be made that are focused on the consistent formatting of the technical learning standards contained in Strand 2, the cross referencing of these standards to academic curriculum framework standards in Strand 3, and maintaining currency with emerging business/industry standards. The ESE Office for Career/Vocational Technical Education recently implemented a competitive grant process that will update all VTE Frameworks over a 3-year cycle beginning in the 2009-10 school year.
- **Vocational Technical Competency Tracking System:** ESE has a Vocational Technical Competency Tracking System database for use by all schools with VTE programs in tracking the level of competency attained by individual VTE students with regards to the VTE Framework learning standards. The system is managed by the ESE Student Assessment Services Unit. Although this is a significant step in the right direction, this system must be developed at a much higher level of functionality and end-user friendliness that is similar to compatible commercial database systems currently available. In addition, sufficient professional development training opportunities must be made available to teachers to properly support the successful use and full implementation of this important initiative including the development of shared formative written and performance assessments for all VTE programs.
- **Professional Development:** The current annual ESE Professional Development Institutes for Educators do not include courses for VTE technical teachers and curriculum specialists similar to those offered for other educators in the commonwealth. There is a need to expand these offerings to address the professional development needs of VTE in order to support professional growth and improve both teacher retention and student achievement.
- **Certificate of Occupational Proficiency:** The Certificate of Occupational Proficiency was created by the Education Reform Act of 1993 and has become an extremely elusive, frustrating, and difficult initiative to develop and implement. The VTE community has always been a strong advocate for a reliable and valid system focused on providing students with a credential of value, as well as providing teachers with data that can be used to improve instruction and student achievement. The ESE Student Assessment Services Unit is currently working with a contracted vendor and an advisory committee on this project with results due to be released by the end of June 2009. The VTE community is looking forward to a more collaborative relationship with the Student Assessment Services Unit in an effort to reach agreement on this very important initiative.

III. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

Postsecondary Linkages: The council recommends that the Secretary of Education appoint a task force that includes appropriate representation from higher education, ESE, guidance professionals, tech-prep, and the VTE Advisory Council to develop and implement a plan to extend, expand, and streamline postsecondary linkages with community colleges for the VTE Class of 2010 and beyond with the following outcomes:

- Formal extension of existing articulation agreements with community colleges to include all students who satisfactorily complete a Chapter 74-approved vocational technical education program;
- Establish a cyclical competitive grant process using federal Perkins funds to ensure the ongoing development, renewal, and updating of statewide articulation agreements for all programs over a 3-year cycle;
- Identify and remove any and all unnecessary barriers within the current system to ensure a seamless transfer of linked credits from high school to community college to 4-year college/university including a comprehensive analysis of the current implementation of accuplacer as a valid and reliable indicator of the need for remedial coursework.

Equal Educational Opportunity Access to VTE: The council recommends that ESE begin to investigate long-term options with regards to expanding the capacity of the VTE system in order to provide access to more students and reduce the significant waiting lists as well as continuing existing efforts to ensure that all students have equal access to this original “choice” model of education.

VTE Frameworks: The council recommends continued support by ESE for the ongoing and updating of the VTE Frameworks within a 3-year cycle.

- **Vocational Technical Competency Tracking System:** The council recommends that the ESE Student Assessment Services Unit develop the tracking system database to a significantly higher level of functionality and user friendliness as well as begin the development of shared formative written and performance assessments for teachers and adequate professional development to support the successful implementation of this initiative.
- **Professional Development:** The council recommends that ESE expand their Professional Development Institutes for Educators to include courses for VTE technical teachers and curriculum specialists.
- **Certificate of Occupational Proficiency:** The council recommends that ESE work closely and collaboratively with the VTE community to reach agreement on a design and implementation model that maximizes value to graduating students while providing meaningful instructional improvement data to teachers and administrators. In addition, if it is determined that a valid, reliable, and practical assessment design for the Certificate of Occupational Proficiency is unattainable, then the collaborative focus of our efforts should shift to exploring alternative assessment paradigms that may require changes to existing regulations and/or law.

III. COUNCIL DETAILS

ESE Administrator and Council Liaison:

Jeffrey Wheeler, State Director of Career/Vocational Technical Education

Co-Chairpersons: Roger Bourgeois, Superintendent, Essex Agricultural Technical School District

Emily Lebo, Director of Career and Technical Education, Boston Public Schools

Members of the 2008-09 Advisory Council:

Mary Ann Cloherty, Executive Director, Women in the Building Trades

Ted Coghlin, Jr., Chair, General Advisory Committee, Worcester Technical High School.

Letitia K. Davis, Director of Occupational Health Surveillance Program, MA DPH
Alice B. DeLuca, Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School Committee
David Ferreira, Executive Director, MA Association of Vocational Administrators (MAVA)
Justin Gomes, Student, Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School
Janis Gorlich, MA Vocational Association (MVA)
Sharon A. Grundel, Workforce Development, MA AHEC, UMass Medical School
Robert Kenrick, Program Manager, MA Division of Occupational Safety
Janice C. Motta, Executive Director, MA Community Colleges Executive Office
Thomas A. Theroux, Executive Director, Plumbing, Heating, Cooling Contractors of MA
Erin Trabucco, General Counsel, Retailers Association of Massachusetts
J.M. "Buck" Upson, Member, Hampden County Regional Employment Board
David R. Wallace, Director, MA Division of Apprentice Training

Council Meeting Dates: January 15, 2009; February 23, 2009; April 1, 2009; and May 20, 2009.
